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THE FAITH OF THE GOSPEL

THE FAITH OF THE GOSPEL

A Manual of Christian Doctrine

BY

ARTHUR JAMES MASON, B.D.

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"With one soul striving together with the Faith of the Gospel"

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DEDICATED TO

JOSEPH,

Bishop of Durham,

AND

BROOKE FOSS WESTCOTT,

Regius Professor of Divinity at Cambridge,

TO WHOM I OWE IT IF I MAY STILL HOPE

TO BEGIN TO BE A DISCIPLE.

471672

PREFACE

THE writer of this book was drawn to his task in the first instance by his experience in conducting Missions. It has always formed part of his plan on such occasions to give consecutive Instructions on the leading doctrines of the Gospel. Twice, especially, in the year 1885,—at S. George's, Hanover Square, and at Stoke Damerel,—it was his privilege to deliver a course of the kind to large audiences of cultivated persons, many of whom desired to be directed to some book which would contain such an exposition of the faith as they had listened to. It was difficult to satisfy the demand by suggesting already published works. The modern English books which have dealt with the field of dogma as a whole have, perhaps, been either too condensed for the ordinary reader, or too slight for the thoughtful. Many of them have had the disadvantage of appearing in the unattractive guise of Commentaries on the Thirty-Nine Articles, or in some other shape not suited to freedom and breadth of treatment.

This history of the origin of the present book will explain its form. While attempting to go with fair thoroughness into the various questions raised, it does not profess to deal with them exhaustively, as a book written for the learned would. It assumes little in the reader besides an average English education and a devout mind. Recondite theological language is avoided. Terms are explained as they occur. It is hoped, therefore, that the book may prove useful, not only to Teachers of the Divine Mysteries at the beginning of their studies, but to many private Christians also, who wish to have an intelligent grasp of their faith.

Dogmatic Theology lies very near, in its purpose, to Apologetics. Its object is not merely to state in orthodox language the sum of what is to be believed, but to commend what it states by shewing its inherent reasonableness. At the same time, it differs from Apologetics inasmuch as it assumes that the student is already a believer, and only needs to have his mind cleared and his faith made explicit. It does not prove every point as it goes along; it suggests, and explains, and connects. If such a word may be used in connexion with a popular handbook, our object in Dogmatics is to exhibit a Christian Philosophy. Mere correctness in the use of terms might be taught in the form of a dictionary; but the dogmatic teacher wishes to shew the bearings of things, to display the unity of truth, to give

an idea of the structure and system in which the lives of men are placed. But in order that it may be truly a Christian Philosophy, and not, like the systems of the Gnostics, a human fabric borrowing elements from the Gospel, it must needs start with faith in Christ, endeavouring purely to arrive at the inward meaning of His words, and to piece together the fragments of truth which it is able to apprehend, in no arbitrary fashion, but in the way in which the Church has always grouped them.

A work of this nature is only by accident controversial. It does not aim at exposing errors, although it does so when contrast with the error serves to elucidate the truth. Controversy is a form of Apologetics in which the opponent, instead of standing outside the faith altogether, claims to be the true representative of it. With such persons the dogmatic teacher is not directly concerned; he is only concerned with them so far as it may be useful to caution the learner against them. This book is not an appeal to those who differ from the Church, but an attempt to help those who profess allegiance to her. Nevertheless, it would be vain to deny that the writer has had throughout a wider outlook. He is not much disposed to believe in controversy as a means of producing agreement, and inclines to think that the positive statement of belief acts much more convincingly upon honest divergence than any amount

of negative criticism. It is his most earnest hope that this book may contribute something to the cause of Christian unity. If any word is contained within its pages which sounds impatient, or bitter, or inflammatory, or supercilious, or in any way uncharitable towards those who differ from us, whether Protestants or in the Roman or Oriental Communions, that word is withdrawn beforehand, as belying the deepest feelings of the writer's heart. There are difficulties enough in the way of agreement upon doctrines so mysterious, and covering so wide a field, without creating fresh obstacles by want of tenderness and sympathy. But yet, if real agreement is ever to be reached, it can only be reached by frank and trustful avowal of the points of difference, not by hushing them up. Unity must be based on a real understanding of one another, and no man can sever those two things which the Prophet joined so closely together when he said, "Execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates, saith the Lord" (Zech. viii. 16).

If there is an object still more to be sought in a work of this kind than the union of Christians amongst themselves, it is to lead souls to a worthier adoration of God and a life of trustful obedience. At every moment, Dogmatic Theology touches Ethics. A manual of Christian doctrine is not a volume of sermons; yet in some ways it ought to answer the same purposes. There is a restfulness in sometimes escaping from the

thought of ourselves, and observing what things are, irrespective of our relations to them. The Christian heart will easily and instinctively deduce comfort and warning, moral direction and devotional attitude, from an intelligent survey of Christian truth. While this book is not written for the purpose of stirring the emotions or guiding the will, it is hoped at least that nothing will be found in it which chills the spirit of worship, or diverts the ethical intention.

It would be impossible for the writer to acknowledge what he owes to other minds, without composing an autobiography. All the influences of a lifetime combine to form a man's belief. To disentangle what has been learned from holy parents, from schoolmasters, in sermons, in intercourse with friends, and in a hundred chance ways, would be an interminable occupation. Nevertheless, the writer would acknowledge once more his paramount obligation to the two great Divines whose names he has inscribed upon the dedicatory page. Their printed works, their public lectures and instructions, the privilege of private conversation with them, have conveyed to him —or it is his own fault—immeasurably more than he can reproduce in words. He ought to apologize for taking, without leave, such a liberty with their names; but he hopes that if in anything his conclusions are not what they would wish, at any rate the book is not wholly destitute of their spirit. Students who are

acquainted with Martensen's *Christian Dogmatics* will discern in the following pages many reminiscences of that noble book. These last years have been very fruitful of strong and reverent exegesis of Holy Scripture, which is the material for Dogmatics. It would be ungrateful not to name the Commentaries of Professor Godet as having laid the present writer under specially deep obligations. For a general view of modern Roman theology he has chiefly used the *Théologie Dogmatique* of Cardinal Gousset, and for that of the Oriental Church, the work of the Russian Bishop Macarius, bearing a similar title.

Three dear friends of the author have kindly gone through the labour of reading his proofs. But for their strictures and suggestions, the work would be far more imperfect even than it is. They know how sincerely grateful to them the author is; but he does not mention who they are, lest he should seem to shelter himself under well-known names from criticism which ought to be borne by himself alone.

He hopes that it is not necessary to add, that if unwittingly and unwillingly he has misrepresented in anything the doctrine of the Church, he submits himself unreservedly to correction.

ALLHALLOWS BARKING,
October, 1887.

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

It is impossible for the writer of this book to express his thankfulness for the way in which the first edition, with all its blemishes, has been received, by prelates and theologians as well as by simple believers, both in England and in America, and for the tokens of God's blessing upon it.

In preparing the second edition, he has had the help of careful reviews which have appeared in public, —and also of a great number of private criticisms, from very different points of view—some of them remarkably full and able. He desires to thank cordially all those who have thus aided him, and hopes that in many instances they will be fairly satisfied with the alterations which will be found in the present text of his work. If in any case he has thought it best to retain what was originally written, he trusts that it will not be thought that it is for want of a deferent consideration of the arguments of his critics.

The first chapter of the book has now been re-

arranged and enlarged, so as to be more in proportion, it is hoped, to the subsequent chapters. A table of the references to the Fathers will be found at the end, for the use of any students who may wish to consult the originals.

ALLHALLOWS BARKING,
November, 1888.

NOTE TO THE THIRD EDITION

FOR the carefully prepared index of Scripture texts referred to in this work, the author is indebted to the kindness of the Rev. John Kitchingman, Rector of Bonsall. Beyond the introduction of this index, and the correction of a few misprints, no other alteration has been made in the present edition.

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Chapter I.

The Being and Nature of God.

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§ 1.

It is no part of the duty of one who expounds the Christian doctrine to prove—in the strict sense of that word—the existence of God. Even the attempt to exhibit such a proof belongs by rights to a different department of study. The Christian Church does not, in the first instance, seek to convince men by argument that God is. Her voice is that of a witness, not of an uncertain inquirer. She bears testimony to what she knows; and, instead of speculating how to establish God's existence, she teaches men, on God's authority, what God is. Indeed, if we follow the guidance of Holy Scripture, we shall not be led to expect that God's existence can be demonstrated like a problem in mathematics. Although the Bible is full of appeals

to nature and history and conscience, as evidence both of the being and of the character of God, it teaches also that this evidence needs something besides intellect in us, if its force is to be felt. "By faith," it says, "we apprehend"—not by logical necessity—"that the worlds have been framed by a word of God" (Heb. xi. 3). And again, lest we should suppose that, under an earlier dispensation, men apprehended the existence and presence of God in some more direct and easy way than ourselves, the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews tells us that the same faculties were required and the same difficulties encountered then as now, and that this must always be the case. "By faith Enoch was translated; for before his translation witness is borne to him that he had pleased God"—so, following the Septuagint, he renders the expression "walked with God"—"but without faith," he adds, "it was impossible to please"—or "walk with"—"Him; for he that cometh unto God must begin by an act of believing (πιστεῦσαι) that He is, and that He is found a Rewarder to them that seek Him out" (Heb. xi. 5, 6). If the logical proof of God's existence were formally complete and self-sufficient, then the doubt or denial of it would be possible only for dull or ill-informed minds. We should in that case look upon a man who would not accept the evidence, as we look upon a man who thinks it still an open question whether the earth is round or flat. His stupidity or his ignorance would move our pity or amusement. But, as a matter of fact, the atheist is not always distinguished from other men by incapacity for following

an argument.[1] The fault that is found with him is graver than that. There is nothing culpable in a want of logic; but the Bible treats as culpable a man who is not convinced of the "everlasting power and divinity" of God by what he sees around him (Rom. i. 20). He *ought* to have been convinced; and this implies that conviction is partly the result of moral causes, and not of intellectual considerations only. Not, of course, that doubt or rejection of the belief in God implies base and sinister motives behind; but it implies a lack of some of those trustful and unsuspicious qualities which lead simple-hearted people to believe. Thus, according to Holy Scripture, we must not look to be led by a process of dry reasoning, with an unmistakeable, inevitable certainty, to the conclusion that God is. There is, intellectually speaking, a leap, an assumption to be made, in which the logical faculty is helped out by other faculties in our nature.

§ 2.

We do not assert, then, that the existence of God is to us on the same footing as the earth's motion round the sun, or the equality of the angles at the base

[1] The saying of the Psalmist, "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God" (Ps. xiv. 1; liii. 1), is sometimes quoted as if it asserted the contrary. But in the first place, in the Hebrew conception of wisdom and folly, the intellectual element is subordinated to the moral; and in the second place the proposition is by no means equivalent to the proposition that "the man who says in his heart, There is no God, is a fool." The Psalmist teaches that when a man is bent upon playing the fool, he is forced to begin by becoming inwardly (however orthodox his outward profession) an atheist;—he must treat God as non-existent.

of an isosceles triangle—an established and unquestionable fact of science. But, at the same time, we claim to have evidence for it so strong as to put the matter beyond all reasonable doubt. The proof may not be formally complete, but it is practically certain. If our belief in God's existence rests in any sense upon an assumption, the assumption is more than justified. Reasoning alone does not, perhaps, force us over the last step; but it carries us all the way up to it, and meets us again when we have taken it.

It is not as if our conviction were the result of a single, slender thread of argument, where the unsoundness of one proposition might invalidate the whole theory. Indeed, it is not even the result of a number of disconnected arguments, which could be taken and demolished one by one. The weight of the various considerations is not merely the aggregate of their several weights. They grow in importance and cogency by being set side by side, until at last it is felt that the convergence of so many different lines of thought towards a belief in God cannot be misleading, and that the conclusion so naturally and obviously drawn must be true.

Certainly no other theory satisfies all the demands of reason like the Christian theory. If we call it impossible to prove that there is a God, we know it to be much more truly impossible to prove that there is not. It is a task which no serious thinker has ever attempted. The utmost that could be maintained is that, from the nature of the case, the question is incapable of being solved in either direction. Agnos-

ticism—the doctrine that it is impossible for us to be sure whether God is or not—is the furthest position that logic will admit of; and to be an agnostic—to give up all hope of settling so weighty a question, to say that the evidence is so scanty or so complicated that no decision can be safely formed, to allow the faculty of judgment to be thus completely paralysed—appears unworthy of human nature, an intellectual cowardice, a despair almost amounting to treason, and liable to take the heart out of all noble inquiry. Christians do not deny that there are difficulties in the way of belief, but they hold that the difficulties of unbelief are far greater, and that in Christianity they have the key by which at last every door of thought may be unlocked which unbelief only bars more firmly.

§ 3.

Most of us, to begin with, believe in the existence of God upon the authority of other men. We are taught it in childhood, as we are taught other facts and theories, by our elders. As we grow up, we have to test the truth of it for ourselves. Unless we are of a specially sceptical turn of mind, we start with a not ungenerous prejudice in favour of the opinion. It is commended to us, in the first instance, by persons whom we are inclined by nature to suppose the wisest and best on earth. We find later on that their belief is shared by almost all the world, and that it is not one of the products of civilization, nor traceable to any known source or to any period of history. Rude

tribes, in all quarters of the globe, and from the remotest antiquity, are seen to have been possessed by the belief in some form or other. Upon this fact has been founded the famous argument from the common consent of mankind. It has, indeed, very little logical weight—for, even if there were no tribes which appear to have lost the belief, or never to have had it, few would be found at the present day to argue from the universality of the belief that an idea of God actually forms part of the constitution of human nature. The utmost that can be validly argued is, that human nature is so constituted that the belief instinctively commends itself to men. But if the argument from the common consent is lacking in logical force, there is a moral impressiveness about it, which raises a presumption in favour of belief. We feel it to be unlikely that practically the whole race should be wrong, when, with such an extraordinary variety of form and circumstance, it testifies its conviction of the existence of unseen powers. If this universal conviction is a delusion, how did the delusion arise and spread so far? Its existence is a positive fact, of which the student of the science of humanity is bound to take account; and it cannot but be felt how hollow and unsatisfactory are all theories which trace the origin of religious belief to a dread of ghosts, or such like. Whether we imagine some primeval revelation, or whether we suppose the belief in God's existence to be the natural impression left upon the unsophisticated mind of man by what he perceives round him and within him, when guided

by the Life which was always the Light of men, we cannot refuse to acknowledge that the fact of the belief being so widespread is a weighty fact. This somewhat vague and uncritical concession to the generally received tradition acquires a more solid value when we find all the greatest names in science and philosophy, with scarcely an exception, in all ages, on the same side as the mass of men. It passes into a real conviction when we believe on a deliberate survey of the reasons which have convinced other thoughtful minds. We can then say to parents and teachers, to mankind and to the Church, what the men of Samaria said to the woman in the Gospel, that authority had done its work, and was no longer needed: "Now we believe, not because of thy saying; for we have heard for ourselves, and know" (S. John iv. 42).

§ 4.

The train of thought which most obviously leads us to believe in the existence of God is that which results from the consideration of the world we live in. Usually the very existence of a world at all has been held to show the existence of a Creator. How, it has been asked, could the world have come into being, if there had been no God to make it?

Perhaps in its popular form this argument has not the strength that is often assigned to it. It begs the question. If it can be proved that the world ever came into being, there must, of course, have been a cause; but apart from revelation, it is not positively

proved that the world, or at least its original elements, ever did come into being. But even had there been no natural indications in the world to make us think of a First Cause of the universe in the physical sense, to start the whole series of physical causation, there would still have been facts to deal with of a more recondite, but perhaps as cogent, a kind. Ontological considerations—that is to say, those which are concerned with the inner problems of existence—suggest the need of a First Cause in a totally different sense. We have to ask, not only how the world began, but how it *is*, and *what* it is. Are these atoms and forces an ultimate fact, or do they represent something behind? Is not their existence founded on something underlying, which is their cause in the same sort of way as the thinking mind is the cause of thought? It is acknowledged that material science tells us nothing about things in themselves, but only about our impressions of the things. Is there any reason to suppose that the things themselves *have* any real existence, except by virtue of relation to intelligence? Even apart from the consideration of the character of the world we live in, its very existence gives us metaphysical reason to discern with confidence a Mind beneath it.

But, if it cannot as yet be said to have been scientifically established that our world had a temporal beginning, it cannot be denied that there are facts which point very convincingly in that direction. The investigations of Sir William Thomson, Professor Clerk Maxwell, and others, with regard to what is called the

Degradation of Energy, tend to show that the universe, even in the most elementary condition which science leads us to conceive of, had a beginning, and that it must have an end. "The theory of heat," it has been said, and the assertion has hardly been challenged, "places us in the dilemma either of believing in creation in an assignable date in the past, or else of supposing that some unexplicable change in the working of natural laws then took place." Even the very molecules of which the world is composed bear the strongest evidence that they are not eternal and self-existent. In the well-known words of Sir John Herschel, each molecule has "the essential character of a manufactured article." Professor Clerk Maxwell, in quoting these words, adds, "In tracing back the history of matter, science is arrested when she assures herself, on the one hand, that the molecule has been made, and on the other, that it has not been made by any of the processes we call natural." Before ever we begin to consider what has been made out of the elements, the elements themselves—the atoms which compose material objects, and the forces which act upon them—make us feel that they owe their origin to Another, and say, "It is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves" (Ps. c. 2).

This feeling is much strengthened when we turn to the phenomena of Life. Supposing that the whole fabric of inorganic matter, with its wonders of light and heat and electricity, with its planetary systems, with the beauties of water, air, and earth, were the result of an accidental play of self-existent

atoms, yet life, so far as we can see, cannot be accounted for in the same way. It is as nearly certain as anything can be that the conditions of matter were at one time such—the solar system consisting of gases at a white heat—that no kind of organic life such as we are acquainted with was possible in it. Organic life, then, has had a beginning in the world, even if matter and force have not. How did it begin? Experimental evidence cannot establish a negative; but the researches of men unprejudiced and competent confirm us in supposing that there is no such thing as spontaneous generation. Science knows of no life which had not a living parent; and science teaches that once there were no living parents on earth to produce a life. Yet here life is. The chasm between the noblest form of inorganic being and the lowest form of organic —a crystal, for instance, and a cell of protoplasm—is so great that no connecting link can be found. So far as we see, no evolution works gradually up to life. It is a sudden, startling phenomenon, which uses matter and force for its own purposes, but which is not derived from them. Whence was the first life introduced into a world which had once been incapable of harbouring it, and which seems for ever incapable of producing it? There seems to be but one answer. If, indeed, it should hereafter be discovered that spontaneous generations take place, or that the production of life was a purely natural outcome of the conditions of the universe at one stage of its history, the Christian will not be at a loss. But in the present state of our knowledge the presence of life in a world

where once there was no life appears to proclaim unmistakeably the existence of a Lifegiver.

Furthermore, since the introduction of sentient life into the world, yet another factor has made its appearance, in human Self-consciousness. The bodily constitution of man may without difficulty be supposed to have been evolved out of lower forms of organic life; but no evolution, no culture, so far as can be ascertained, is able to put even into the highest animals the human power of reflexion. The acuteness, the intelligence, the memory, of an animal never rise any nearer to it. However highly developed, they form but the ground material, so to speak, out of which our human self-consciousness constructs itself a home, just as life constructs for itself a home out of particles of matter. To many thinkers, even the distance between inorganic and organic existence appears not so wide and impassable as that between merely sentient and truly conscious life. Where, then, are we to look for that power which laid hold upon the highest of animal forms, and, by adding the gift of self-consciousness, first made of it a man? Once more we repeat, that if it can be shown that the human mind is only a development from the analogous faculties found in other animals, the Christian, so far from being staggered, will only find fresh matter for adoring the wisdom and power of God. But, so far as we can at present judge, the only reasonable way of accounting for the genesis of the human mind is to suppose a Mind which created it.

Thus the history of successive stages of the

course of the natural world, so far as it is set before us by science, seems to indicate clearly some principle of causation, acting upon the world, without belonging to the world itself. Three great beginnings present themselves to view,—a beginning of matter, a beginning of life, a beginning of mind. None of these is shown to have led on to the next as to a purely natural consequence; yet, when matter was ready for the reception of life, and life for the reception of free consciousness, life and consciousness came. We are drawn, therefore, to conclude that at these points a directly creative agency was at work.

And not only so. We conclude at least as strongly that that creative agency had a deliberate design in its operations. The more closely we examine the evidence of nature, the more it appears that this preparation of the world for its successive enrichments was intentional and intelligent. If some imaginable universe might have existed without a Creator, we feel that the universe with which we are acquainted could not. This is not only the sentiment of unscientific piety. Every year new facts are discovered which impress the mind more and more with the sense of law in the world; and although, if we were certain that there was no God, we might resign ourselves wonderingly to the conclusion that it was a property self-existing in the very nature of things, it seems far simpler to believe that the law indicates the presence of guiding thought. Blind forces acting at random upon lifeless matter could not possibly—or at least the odds against it are infinitely great—have

reduced *chaos* to *cosmos*, and produced regularity, order, unity, beauty, and so arranged the whole system and hierarchy of existences, as (with some apparent exceptions) to subserve the well-being and happiness of each. To many minds the idea of Evolution, which in our time has made such way, so far from militating against the belief in a Creator, is entirely in favour of that belief. It lends itself perfectly to Christian teleology, or the thought of a purpose to which things are directed. An evolution which aims at nothing in particular, or which goes from better to worse, would be against the Christian belief; but when we hear of an evolution which is an advance from a ruder economy to a more delicate, which adapts things more and more to their surroundings, and the surroundings to the things, then it seems to us that matter and force, and life, and self-consciousness itself, must be instruments in the hands of One who has an object in view.

It seems impossible candidly to reflect upon these successive steps in the history of nature and to examine in detail the mutual adaptation of the parts of this great whole, especially in the animal and vegetable kingdoms, without coming to the conclusion that there is a wise and mighty Will behind it all. John Stuart Mill was not a man who held a brief for Christianity, and few men have felt so bitterly as he did the defects and cruelties of nature; yet in his last posthumous essay, "On Theism," he sums up his cold investigation of the argument from the appearances of design by saying, "I think it must be allowed that

in the present state of our knowledge, the adaptations in nature afford a large balance of probability in favour of creation by intelligence."

§ 5.

The balance of probability becomes greater when we add the evidence supplied by our mental and moral constitution. It is difficult, indeed, to throw this argument into a form as popular as the argument from the adaptations in nature; for the ordinary mind is not accustomed to follow trains of abstract thought. It may suffice for our present purpose to ask how the idea of God, as held by an enlightened Christian, was ever formed. Man's power of mental creation is very limited. He can only construct out of materials which come to hand. He can combine elements with which he is acquainted into imaginary forms, but he cannot for instance, in any practical way, conceive of a fourth dimension, an additional sense, or a new colour. But man has ideals, which transcend all experience, although suggested by it. The finite leads him up to the infinite, the imperfect to the perfect. His circumscribed powers make him uneasy without the thought of a power not circumscribed. His fragmentary knowledge makes him demand the existence of a mind to which the sum of truth is present. The artist is unsatisfied by his highest efforts; the perfection of beauty lies immeasurably beyond him. And this ideal, this infinite perfection, is not man's creation. He has not made it —each man does not make it—for himself. He feels

that *it is there.* He is but striving to apprehend a reality. He cannot think of himself as inventing the very material of his thought; he is moving on solid ground, through regions prepared for him before he came thither, and dimly descries still fairer regions beyond, to which he aspires to penetrate. The only way to account satisfactorily for our idea of the perfect Being after whom we aspire is to believe that He is, and that men, by virtue of kinship with Him, catch glimpses of Him.

And this observation holds true, above all, in the domain of morals. A man's sense of right and wrong may become depraved, like his sense of beauty; but when men are in a fairly healthy condition of conscience, there is a moral ideal, practically the same for all, which they acknowledge when it is shown to them. This moral ideal lays hold upon them. Conscience evidently speaks, not of itself, but of something else whose authority it recognises. To that moral ideal men find themselves under an unique obligation. They feel an awed sense of responsibility towards it. They are uncomfortable when they have neglected it. Men will think little of a slip in grammar, a lack of artistic perfection; but they will not lightly trifle with their conscience. And when they make any approaches to the moral ideal, they are conscious that they are not creating the ideal which they approach, but that their action corresponds to something which actually is; to use the language of Scripture, they are "doing the truth." Intuitively they demand that the moral law, which asserts its mastery over themselves,

should assert an universal mastery, and form part of the very constitution of things. While obedience to it conduces both to the happiness of the world in general and to an enlightened self-interest, conscience is not satisfied to consider the moral law as a set of rules which human prudence has collected with a view to such ends. All attempts to make it universally binding break down when any other ethical basis is taken instead of that which makes right to be necessarily right, and the whole world to be framed with a view to it. And as men labour more earnestly to attain in their own lives to moral perfection, which ever seems further from them as they near it, they see with increasing clearness that it is impossible to separate the ideal of sanctity from the ideal of beauty, the ideal of knowledge, the ideal of power; and they feel that it is no idolatry, no worship of the work of their own hands or of the fiction of their own brains, when they fall down before this Ideal of all perfections, and say, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty which *was*, and *is*, and *is to come*."

§ 6.

Revelation corroborates and completes the evidence borne by nature and the mind of man. If we had no grounds apart from revelation for thinking that God is, there would have been much reason for suspecting the revelation. But "the sender of the alleged message," says John Stuart Mill in the essay to which we have before referred, "is not a sheer invention; there are grounds independent of the message itself

for belief in his reality—grounds which, though insufficient for proof, are sufficient to take away all antecedent improbability from the supposition that a message may really have been received from him." Nay, we may say, there is a strong antecedent probability in behalf of revelation. It would surprise us if such a Creator as we infer from the phenomena of the world and man had not wished to be known by His intelligent creation. And the Church maintains a standing witness that, as a matter of fact, the Creator has made Himself known to her. She affirms that she was gradually prepared for the final and complete revelation by an advancing series of preliminary revelations, "in many parts and in many manners" receiving from time to time, as the progress of her education enabled her to bear it, more and more of the Divine communication. Few arguments for the belief in God are more convincing than those derived from a study of human history, with its plain traces of moral training and providential discipline, whether we consider the experience of individual lives, or the fashioning of the race for that which it was to receive. At last, the life of Godhead actually presented itself to the sight, and hearing, and touch of men, under the conditions of the life of man. That Jesus Christ really lived and died is doubted by none. The historical consequences which have flowed from that life and death are open for all to examine. And the more rigorous the examination is, the more it appears that the account of Jesus Christ given by the Church is rational and straightforward, and alone consistent

with all the facts. This carries us, however, somewhat beyond our present subject; for the account of Jesus Christ given by the Church is that He was Himself God Incarnate. But even if, for the moment, we leave the question of our Lord's own proper Divinity, we may truly say that the life and work of Christ are inexplicable, are impossible, if the God from whom He professed to come had no existence. Taken in conjunction with the strong cumulative evidence derived from elsewhere, the phenomena presented by the history of Jesus Christ and of the Church may be said—not indeed in the logical, but in the judicial, sense—to prove that God is.

§ 7.

If any one finds it to be a stumbling-block that proof in the stricter sense is still wanting, it is easy to reply that there are many other things of which we are certain, though they lie beyond strict proof. Can we prove to demonstration that such a man as Cæsar ever lived? Can we prove that the world round us is not a dream of our own? or that motion is a reality? or even that we ourselves are in existence? The famous *solvitur ambulando* of Diogenes, and the famous *cogito, ergo sum* of Descartes, are appeals from the tyranny of a sophistical logic to the good sense of mankind. In like manner, God has not made Himself the subject of prying experiments or of pedantic syllogisms. Perhaps, if His existence had been one of those things of which formal proof could

be given to the world, the acknowledged fact would have lost its interest. It would have killed individual inquiry. Few men would have cared to verify what no one would dispute. The tendency would have been to rest upon an intellectual assent to the proposition. When it came to the proof, the poor and simple would have been at too great a disadvantage compared with the philosopher. We should have lost all those touching and noble associations which gather round the name of faith, and should have had instead a cold science—common property, and so appropriated by none. As it is, each man has to prove the fact for himself. It is the great adventure, the great romance of every soul—this finding of God. Though so many travellers have crossed the ocean before us, and bear witness of the glorious continent beyond, each soul for itself has to repeat the work of a Columbus, and discover God afresh. And this can indeed be done; but intellectual argument is not the sole nor the main means of apprehension. At best it prepares the way. Moral purification is equally necessary. Then spiritual effort, determined, concentrated, renewed in spite of failure—calm and strong prayers in the Name of Christ—enable the believer to say, like Jacob after he had wrestled with the Angel, "I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved." And every soul which has thus proved for itself, by an unmistakeable experience, the existence of God, goes to swell the ever-increasing weight of testimony which draws other men to believe. He is added to the number of those who testify that God

has not only revealed Himself in the past, but that He is still accessible to all who approach Him rightly.

§ 8.

Emerging from the dim region of human guess-work into the light of an accepted revelation, we desire to understand, by the teaching which God has given us, what He is and what He is like. The nature of God is briefly stated by our Lord, when He says to the woman of Samaria, "God is spirit" (S. John iv. 24). His meaning is somewhat obscured in the English Bible. To say that "God is *a* spirit" might mean that He belongs to a class, that He is a specimen of an order comprising other beings besides Himself. Our Lord's words—πνεῦμα ὁ Θεός—make no such suggestion. They do not assign God to a class, but simply describe what His nature is—as, in the previous chapter, our Lord had said to Nicodemus, "That which is born of the Spirit is spirit:" or as, in a later one, He says to His disciples, "The sayings which I have spoken unto you are spirit" (S. John iii. 6; vi. 63). Energetic life forms part of the notion which the word conveys; but, beyond that, we can best understand it by negatives. God is not flesh. There is nothing material about Him. The finest and most subtle of ethereal substances, such as some have supposed to invest even angels and disembodied spirits, is as alien from His nature as the coarsest. Not only has He no "shape" or bodily outline, which men might conceivably see (S. John v. 37), but He has no extension in space at all, and bears no local relation to

anything. Hence it is that neither at Jerusalem nor on the Samaritan mountain could men find Him by being (so to speak) on the same spot with Him. If they were to find Him there or elsewhere it must be by a purely inward movement. "God is spirit; and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth."

§ 9.

There are, indeed, other spirits besides God, which may, therefore, be said in a sense to belong to the same class of beings with Him, inasmuch as, like Him, they are immaterial. But there is this fundamental difference between God and all other beings, even those whose nature is most like to His—they have an origin; and that origin is not from themselves; mediately or immediately it proceeds from Him, and they depend always upon Him. But God, on the other hand, has no origin, and depends upon nothing else. He eternally is. His existence is the final and necessary fact upon which all other facts repose. The mystery of being is beyond our thought; and we do not deny the reality of other existences when we say that God alone is; we only assert that their being is of an altogether different kind from His. Other things have a true, but only a contingent, being; but God is, because He is, and for no other reason. No other will but His own contributes to His existence; and He Himself cannot choose otherwise than to be. Our springs of life are in Him; but His are nowhere but in the depths of His own being. This is the

meaning of the revelation made to Moses at the Bush (Ex. iii. 14). We have not exhausted the significance of the name "I Am" when we say that it denotes God's attributes of eternity, of having neither beginning nor end, of unchangeableness. All these are natural consequences from the name "I Am," but the name itself contains a positive, not a negative, thought. It expresses God's absolute existence. While cutting at the root of every pantheistic conception, by declaring the independent, personal self-consciousness of God, it teaches the infinite fulness of life which God has within His own being.

§ 10.

Before drawing nearer to consider the attributes and character of God, it is wholesome to remind ourselves how imperfect must necessarily be any human setting forth of the subject. Words fail us in attempting to describe even what we are able to perceive; and what we are able to perceive concerning God falls immeasurably short of the truth. We cannot fully realise even what things are which come closely under our external observation, and whose nature is more limited than our own. "You do not understand," says S. Basil, "the nature of the smallest ant, and how can you boast that you can depict to yourself the inconceivable power of God?" No definition, no description of God can be given; because no creaturely intelligence can form any adequate conception of Him. God is incomprehensible. When, indeed, He is so called in our version of the Athanasian symbol, the

term is used to express a somewhat different thought: —it there represents the Latin *immensus*, which is generally taken to mean that God is not bounded by measures of space. But He is also incomprehensible in the larger meaning of the word, as transcending all imaginations and thoughts of Him which can be entertained or framed. However noble the powers with which He has endowed us, they cannot take Him in. "Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know?" (Job xi. 7, 8).

And yet the incomprehensibleness of God must not be so interpreted as to mean that God is altogether unintelligible to man, and that we have no powers by which truly to know Him. It is not even the case that revelation (in the technical sense) was necessary before man could know God at all;—had it been so, then no revelation could have been made. If man's natural faculties were incapable of any real apprehension of God's attributes and character, it would have been in vain to send him any message about God, for the message would have found in him nothing to which it could address itself. S. Irenæus, arguing against some teachers of his time, who misquoted Christ's saying that the Father was unknown except through the revelation of the Son, says, "The Lord did not say that the Father and the Son could not be known at all. In that case His own coming would have been useless. For why did He come hither? Was it to say to us, 'Do not seek after God;

for He is unknown, and you will not find Him?'" From that earliest Gospel (as it has been called) which proclaims that man was made in God's image, to the end of the Bible, both Testaments teach that to know God is our very life, and the thing for which we were created. Our knowledge of Him, whether by nature or by grace, can never attain to being an exhaustive knowledge, but it can be a true one nevertheless, and a glorious and satisfying one. When we learn that God has intelligence and will, that He is just and tender-hearted, the words are not mere symbols for something that we cannot understand: they describe the actual facts, which we can in some degree appreciate because we share those faculties and try to practise those virtues. We cannot, assuredly, understand the inner conditions of the Divine life and action —*how* God thinks, and feels, and wills. Theologians are careful to teach that the perfections of God are not found in Him in the identical way in which the like are found in the creatures; but none the less the perfections which we are taught to adore in Him have their adumbrations and copies in us, by virtue of which, limited as they are, we are enabled to apprehend Him with an ever-advancing clearness and richness of apprehension.

§ 11.

God is revealed to us as being One. "Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord" (Deut. vi. 4). When God is declared in Scripture to be One, the object is not usually to warn us from polytheism and

teach us monotheism instead. Moses does not say, "The Lord thy God is *the* One—the only—Lord." That truth is indeed often expressed in the Bible. "Is there a God besides Me? yea, there is no God; I know not any" (Isa. xliv. 8). But (usually, at least) the unity of God set before us is not numerical, denying the existence of a second; it is integral, denying the possibility of division. God is not made up out of a number of elements into which He might be resolved again. The Schoolmen were accustomed to speak of Him as "pure act," because they would not even allow of a difference in God between what is potential and what is actual,—between what God might do and what He does. His attributes,—the adjectives by which He is set forth to us,—do not represent qualities which He might conceivably be without: they are Himself. His perfections are His very being. Nor are His perfections in reality diverse from each other. Although they necessarily represent different notions to our finite thought, they are in Him finally and fundamentally the same. God has no parts. "If it were so," said one of the prophet-like philosophers of early Greece, "then the component elements would sometimes get the better of each other and sometimes the worse; and that, in one who is God, is impossible." There can be no conflict within Him, such as there is in us between flesh and spirit. He cannot be at cross-purposes with Himself. He is not moved, as we are, by incompatible impulses. In His singleness of nature there is not one set of feelings prompting Him to work and another to rest, one to

punish and another to spare, one to remember and another to forget. However infinite the variety of His action, it is but the manifestation, in varying circumstances, of one and the self-same character and will. And in everything which He does, or thinks, or wills, God is wholly engaged. His consciousness is undivided, and is entirely present at every point of His working.

§ 12.

For the unity of God is not the unity of a limited Being. God is infinite. In its negative sense, His infinity implies that the bounds which confine us do not confine Him, whether in respect of knowledge or of power, of space or time. In its positive sense, infinity indicates that God possesses every perfection in its complete and absolute fulness, so as to contain exhaustively all that belongs to the conception of those perfections.

The infinity of God's knowledge we express by the word "omniscient." By that word we do not mean only that God can, if He chooses, find everything out, that nothing can ultimately be hidden from Him, that He has all departments of knowledge open to Him when He is pleased to turn to them. We mean that all objects of knowledge and thought are at all times actually present to His consciousness. Nothing is too minute for Him to be observant of. The humblest forms of life are under His eye, even after they have passed away from their earthly exhibition. "Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings? and not one of

the five (ἐπιλελησμένον ἐστίν) has vanished from the mind of God. Behold," adds our Lord, "the very hairs of your head are all numbered" (S. Luke xii. 6, 7). The laws which regulate so minutely all energy and matter, are but ways of stating this truth as observed by our experience: every particle, molecule, atom, represents a thought of God, and continues to exist because He is still thinking it. His knowledge is exact and searching to the uttermost.

But the omniscience of God does not consist in an exhaustive perception of ever so many separate things. Were this so, creation would never be anything but a confusion; there would be no unity nor order in it. God's knowledge is not analytical only; it is at the same time in the highest degree synthetic. God does not become lost and bewildered in a multiplicity of details. His unity enables Him to see all things that are or can be, in all their relations to each other, actual or possible. Being Himself One and at the same time infinite, He has before Him for ever all things and thoughts in every conceivable combination of beauty and wisdom. It is not necessary for Him, as for us, to turn His attention from one subject in order to fix it upon another, nor to run His eye backwards and forwards to see the mutual bearings of the various parts of that which is. This power of perfect synthesis makes Him what the Bible calls Him, "the only wise God" (Rom. xvi. 27).

Thus God's omniscience is very closely connected with what is called His "omnipresence." That word ought not to be taken as a synonym of "ubiquity," as

if God were in an immense number of places at once. We must not think of Him as diffused universally everywhere throughout space, a portion of His Being attaching itself to every object in existence. To put Him in any place, or any number of places at once, would reduce Him to being of the same nature as the things among which He would be placed. God is not everywhere; He is nowhere. Rather than speak of God as being in every place, we should say that every place is in God,—that all existing objects, material or immaterial are present to *Him*, to His one consciousness, are in His mind, in immediate contact with Himself. It is to this spiritual, as distinct from physical or local, omnipresence that the Psalmist points when he says, "Whither shall I go from Thy *Spirit?* or whither shall I flee from Thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, Thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, Thou art there. . . . Yea, the darkness hideth not from Thee; the darkness and the light to Thee are both alike" (Ps. cxxxix. 7, foll.). The presence and the knowledge of God are treated as identical.

As, however, the presence of God is not merely one of knowledge, but of operation and of manifestation also, therefore it admits of degrees of nearness. He is "in all things" (Eph. iv. 6), manifesting Himself by every visible thing which He has made, so that the believer moves with reverence wherever he goes; but He is more specially present in particular places and particular acts, in which it is His pleasure to manifest Himself more decisively, so that the believer enters

those places and engages in those acts with an access of solemnity and awe. It is a favourite thought with the Fathers that the "place" of God was the Incarnate Son; for there, in and through a bodily organism, was manifested not merely (as in other men) a measure of God's fulness, such as observers were capable of appreciating, but the entire sum of God's being. "God was in Christ" (2 Cor. v. 19) as in no other place. And this presence of manifestation is not dependent upon being perceived. God is in all things, in the Church, in Christ, whether men recognise it or not. Irreverence and unbelief may exclude His presence subjectively from themselves; they cannot destroy it objectively out of the things and acts in which it chooses to appear.

What we have said about the relations between God's omniscience and His presence in space may be applied also to His presence in time. He is not in His own nature subject to the one any more than to the other. Space and time alike are names for certain relations in which finite things, by His appointment, stand to each other; God Himself transcends them. As God is not a being who pervades all places by local expansion, so neither is He a being who pervades all ages by temporal duration. This is the true notion of eternity. Eternity does not mean only a series of successive moments which had no beginning and will have no end. It means that permanent state of existence which is independent of succession altogether. The words "future" and "past" only become realities for God in His dealing with creation. And indeed,

for that matter, so does the word "present" also; for, as God is not to be conceived of as located in one point of space, commanding all other space, which to Him is "here," so neither is He to be conceived of as dating at one point of time, commanding all other time, which to him is "now."

Yet, while He transcends all these links which bind finite things together, He holds them all clearly and feelingly in His one infinite intelligence. It is impossible for us to form any idea how temporal succession may look from the standpoint of eternity; but we may be sure that it is seen to have a true value. If time has no meaning for God, it is an illusion for us. He enters into it, and sympathizes with those creatures of His which are subject to it, for it is part of the orderliness and system that is in the mind of God; and in a sense He subjects Himself to it by creating a world in which it finds place. It is a law which He has imposed, not upon us only, but upon Himself in His dealings with us; and we cannot think of it as an arbitrary law. God is not contemptuous of time. His life compared with ours is not like ours compared with that of some ephemeral insect. To the insect the interval between sunrise and sundown might appear as long as threescore years and ten to man. Thus Moses says, "A thousand years in Thy sight are but as yesterday," as if the vast total of God's life diminished the significance of any measurable portion of it. But the fuller thought of the New Testament brings out the converse side. "One day is with the Lord as a thousand years" (Ps. xc. 4; S. Pet. iii. 8).

He values the infinitesimal in time, even as He does in space; and thus we can see that the Bible does not use an unmeaning metaphor when it speaks of the patience, the long-suffering, the expectation of God.

Two main inferences may be drawn from this thought of God's eternity. The first is that the omniscience of God extends to those things which to us are still future, both in general and in detail. He uses this knowledge as a testimony to His sovereign Godhead, when He foretells to men that which will come to pass. "I am God, and there is none like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done" (Isa. xlvi. 9). From the point of view of absolute eternity such knowledge cannot strictly be called foreknowledge. To speak of God's foreknowledge is an accommodation to human powers of understanding like speaking of God's coming into His temple or going up from Abraham. Yet, since the conditions of time are those under which God is revealed to us and we are assured that that revelation is not an illusory one, we use with confidence the language which speaks of God as foreknowing, foreseeing, foreordaining. The objection which has been sometimes urged against God's foreknowledge, that it destroys the notion of creaturely liberty, appears to be based upon a confusion of thought. God's foreknowledge of events does not in any way bring the events about; it is not the cause of what is to come, but rather the result. There can be no question that the thing which will be, will be, and God knows what it will be; but that is

a very different thing from saying that what will be, must be, and that God's foreseeing of it fixes it to be. The future is no more necessary because God foreknows it than it would be if we could imagine that He did not. The difficulties connected with this matter are grave; but they appear to attach themselves rather to the thought of God's omnipotence than to that of His omniscience, His will rather than His knowledge.

The second main inference drawn from God's independence of temporal succession is that He is immutable. "I am the Lord, I change not" (Mal. iii. 6). The causes which produce change and dislocation in us by the course of time have nothing analogous to them in the life of God. We are one thing to-day and another to-morrow, but God is unvaryingly the same, without progress or falling back, without alteration slow or sudden. He does not go through a series of transient phases, like us. This is what is meant by calling God impassible, or exempt from passions. He is so, in the same sense as He might be called exempt from actions. We cannot tell how either actions or passions appear from the position of absolute eternity, since both imply to our minds the transition from state to state; but with this caution we receive in simple faith what is revealed to us in regard to both. We are compelled to think of God as engaged in a course of action in His relation to the world, and we are compelled to think of Him as reacted upon by it in turn, and, as He follows its development, experiencing now satisfaction and now pain. Impassible is not the same as unfeeling. If words mean anything, God

is capable of grief and joy, of anger and of gratification; though there is nothing which can force such states of feeling upon Him without His being willing to undergo them. It would be a defect in Him, not a perfection, were it otherwise. There is nothing in this thought to conflict with God's revelation of Himself as eternally happy. He is "the blessed God," "the blessed and only Potentate" (1 Tim. i. 11; vi. 15), not merely as the object of His creatures' blessing (εὐλογητός), but as having in Himself every element of perfect bliss (μακάριος). But if God is love, in any sense intelligible to us, He would be without an element of bliss if He were incapable of suffering. Love, unable to manifest itself through a true self-sacrifice, would be love unsatisfied. Therefore we hold that the phrases in which God speaks of Himself as wounded and wearied by the conduct of His creatures, are not mere metaphors, but substantial truths. Only we must remember that no storms of grief can shake the permanent serenity of God in its inmost deeps, inasmuch as God sees the end from the beginning, and knows Himself to be able to overcome at last all that now causes sorrow to Him and to those whom He loves.

For the all-knowing and eternal God is revealed as being also an almighty God. By this title He is most frequently described to us, not only in the Church Creeds, but in the Bible, because it sums up all the rest of the Divine attributes. No being could be almighty whose knowledge was limited, who should have to look on to an uncertain future, or move from

place to place at His work, who was irresolute and divided in mind, or who depended for His completeness or for very existence upon something outside Himself. God has revealed Himself to us as almighty. In other words, He has entire freedom of action, coupled with unlimited resources.

Men commonly interpret the word "almighty" to mean "able to do everything." This, however, is not accurate. It gives a false idea about God; for there are some things which God cannot do. "He cannot deny Himself." "It is impossible for God to lie" (2 Tim. ii. 13; Heb. vi. 18). God is unable to do anything bad, or capricious, or irrational, or self-contradictory. But the inability is not due to any deficiency of power, or any restriction placed upon God from without. It rises from the fact that He knows all things, and therefore cannot be deceived into preferring that which is less good. "God is not tempted of evil things" (S. James i. 13); they can have no attraction for Him. He can do whatever He wills; but these things He cannot, by His very nature, will to do. It is impossible for the perfect to choose to be less than perfect.

Indeed, the Latin word *omnipotens* (as well as the Greek παντοκράτωρ, which it represents) conveys a different notion from that of power to do anything. The word is of the same class as *caelipotens*, "master of the sky," *armipotens*, "master of arms," and the like. *Omnipotens* means "master of all." It expresses God's universal sovereignty, His dominion over all things that are or that can be. For, on the one hand, God is

complete master of Himself. He is not, like the god of the pantheist, blindly struggling forward into self-possession. "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all" (1 S. John i. 5). He is profoundly conscious of all His own fulness. No part of it remains for Him yet to discover. Thus He wields all His infinite powers with an unerring precision, and cannot be blinded with regard to the issues of His action. This being so, it follows that God is complete master of all other things as well. For all things that are not God are creatures of God; and God cannot have created anything and then lost the control of it. Thus even those things which seem most defiantly and outrageously in rebellion against Him are still under His hand, and His omnipotence will be proved at length the more strikingly by means of their rebellion. A great but limited power may dispose of things and forces which cannot choose for themselves; but nothing but omnipotence can create free wills, and give them full play, and remain sovereign over them.

§ 13.

It was, perhaps, imaginable—though barely so—that these attributes might have been found in a being without any moral character, or even with a character that was immoral. Though a Socrates was able to teach that "virtue is knowledge," yet, in our present fallen condition, we should hardly have known for certain, without revelation, the true nature of virtue and vice, and therefore the necessary alliance between perfect knowledge and perfect holiness. Left

to themselves, men have worshipped gods of the vilest wickedness. Heathen religions teach that the deity may do what is evil without suffering contamination, even as light is uncontaminated by shining on a dung-hill. But our God is known to us as a being of perfect and infinite righteousness. Moral light and intellectual light are found to be the same thing in Him who "*is* Light," constituting the glory in which God lives.

This glory cannot be approached by man (1 Tim. vi. 16); but it is everywhere assumed that men are capable of apprehending it aright. From the perceptions of our conscience, when our conscience is enlightened by grace and purified by honest striving after moral truth, we can argue confidently to the moral action of God. The moral law is not, like time and space, a limitation imposed by the Creator upon His creatures while He is Himself independent of it. He gives us clearly to understand that right and wrong are the same for Himself as for us. The rule of justice and purity is not an arbitrary and conventional rule which could have been other than it is. Right is not right simply because it is the will of God; wrong is not wrong merely because God has forbidden it. These names are not an expression for some personal preferences of our Maker. It would have been impossible for Him to have made wrong to be right, or right to be wrong, by an exercise of authority. God Himself does right because it is right.

Yet, at the same time, it must not be supposed that the moral law exists independently of God, or that He finds it imposed upon Him by some external

necessity, and obeys it as a subject, or even administers it as a governor responsible to the law which He administers. There is no such thing as a moral law apart from God. He *is* the moral law. That law for us cannot fully be expressed in precepts, not even in the nicest subtleties of directors of the conscience. It is essentially a living ideal. That "perfect law of liberty" (S. James i. 25) by which we are ruled consists in nothing else but the imitation of the Divine character. To this it owes its freedom, its infinite depth, and its unity. "Be ye therefore perfect," so our Lord sums up the new code of His kingdom, "even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (S. Matt. v. 48).

But such terms as "the moral law" are too cold to be used in connexion with the character of God. He is perfectly calm, it is true, and fulfils His own infinite ideal of moral perfection without a struggle, without an effort, without need of vigilance. It is natural to Him. And yet the whole energy of the Divine Being is in it. For He is not merely "pure," as one whom no evil thing has ever sullied (Hab. i. 13). He is not merely "faithful" (1 Cor. x. 13; 1 S. Pet. iv. 19), as one who recognises that He owes a duty and who is ready to perform it. He is not merely "righteous" (Ps. vii. 9; 2 Thess. i. 6), as one who will see equity all round Him, and will scrupulously bring home to all the true nature of their deeds. Purity and faithfulness and righteousness might possibly be found in one who was in some degree apathetic. But God is holy. By that word, all good

moral qualities which we regard separately, like light when broken by a prism, are shown to be one, and that one quality is shown in its beauty and its intensity. God is holy. He burns with love of all that is noble, and with hatred of all that is base. "The righteous Lord loveth righteousness" (Ps. xi. 7). It is the idea of His holiness which enables us to understand those strange words in which the prophets speak of His vehement transports of wrath against sin. "God is jealous, and the Lord revengeth; the Lord revengeth, and is furious. . . . Who can stand before His indignation? and who can abide in the fierceness of His anger? His fury is poured out like fire, and the rocks are thrown down by Him" (Nah. i. 2—6). At first sight it might seem as if holiness meant nothing but the absence of evil; but that is because we have so little acquaintance with positive moral beauty. Even God's hatred of sin is not a full measure of His love of righteousness; for sin is not an infinite thing, but righteousness is infinite (Ps. lxxi. 15). The holiness of God is that which constitutes His irresistible attractiveness. It is not the sight of God's uncreated eternity, nor of His majestic unity, nor of His exhaustive knowledge, nor of His all-mastering might, nor even of His severe justice, which most moves the hearts of His intelligent creatures to adoration. It is the ever-deepening perception which they have of the steady and awful zeal for that which is morally right which lives within Him. Before this, the Seraphim, who for countless ages have had the uninterrupted task of contemplation, hide their

eyes and cry continually, as if "stung with the splendour of a sudden thought," their admiration of fresh glories of His holiness coming into view. And we, who are not, like them, unfallen, serve God with reverence and godly fear, acknowledging that "our God is a consuming fire" (Heb. xii. 29).

§ 14.

But the crowning revelation vouchsafed to us concerning the nature and character of God is contained in the words, "God is Love" (1 S. John iv. 8, 16). We know what love is because we are capable of loving. It is no vague general benevolence. Still less is it a hunger for something which will supply a felt want. It is a strong and calm outgoing of the being towards personal objects. Its main exhibition lies in seeking the highest benefit of the beloved, not counting the cost to itself. It cannot, indeed, be contented until it receives love in answer to love; yet it does not love for the sake of the reward which it expects. It says, with the voice of its great exponent (whatever the true text may be), "I will gladly spend and be spent for you, though the more abundantly I love you the less I be loved" (2 Cor. xii. 15). "Love suffereth long, and is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not the things which are its own, is never provoked, taketh no account of the evil; rejoiceth not at unrighteousness, but rejoiceth along with the truth; beareth with all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things" (1 Cor. xiii. 4—7). This

is the description of God. Love is His very being; it is not an attribute which mixes in among the rest and tempers their exhibition. All the other attributes are attributes of love. It is love that is one and indivisible. The omniscience is the omniscience of love; love is everywhere present; love is eternal. Omnipotence belongs to love; righteousness and holiness mark the character of love. Whatever God does, love does, and He does it because He loves. Whatever perfect love would design, God designs and will perform; for love and God are but two names to express the same meaning.

Chapter II.

The Blessed Trinity.

The Athanasian Creed the Church's expression of Responsibility for the Truth—Doctrine of the Trinity no figment—Error of Tritheism and of Sabellianism—Difficulty of Arian teaching from point of view of Philosophy—A Trinity of Persons required by the conception of God as self-conscious Love—Distinction of the Three as revealed in Scripture—Subordination of the Son and Spirit to the Father.

§ 1.

To many persons, not otherwise prejudiced against Christianity, the doctrine that there are Three Persons in the Godhead is a serious stumbling-block. They imagine that they would find it simpler to believe in a God who should be one person as well as one substance, like the God presented by the Muhammadan or by the modern Jewish religion. It seems to them a needless complication, an arbitrary dogmatic imposition, to teach that there is a Father, a Son, and a Spirit, who are all One. If they do not think it an actual contradiction, a sheer impossibility, they think it a metaphysical puzzle, which the brains of ordinary Christians ought not to be troubled with. The difficulty felt by such persons is increased by the solemnity with which the Church has insisted upon the impor-

tance of this doctrine. The *Quicumque vult*, by its warnings, even more than by the difficult language of its statements, repels them from assenting to the truths asserted. Whether that psalm is suited in the present state of things for public recitation, may without disloyalty be debated. But it is to be observed that the warnings of the *Quicumque* are not addressed to the world outside, or to those who have never received the faith. It is the Church's warning to herself and to her own children who anxiously desire to be saved. It is an exhortation to prize the great treasure which is committed to the Church, and to her alone. The Church is the repository of revealed truth. She holds it in trust for mankind, and is responsible to God for "keeping it whole and undefiled," that is, without mutilation and without admixture. False notions having been circulated from time to time by persons who claimed to represent her, she was bound to point out to the faithful where those false notions differed from the truth as she had received it, and to warn those who cared for her judgment of the grave moral fault they would incur if they should treat the revelation of God irreverently, whether through negligence they allowed the truth to be forgotten, or through presumption defined it amiss.

The *Quicumque*, in its intention at least, is not an attempt to impose metaphysical subtleties, but to oppose them. It forbids them; it keeps the ground clear, and will not permit "the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" to be reduced by those who have been baptized into it to the barren

unrealities invented by a Sabellius or an Arius. But in thus resisting the aggressions of a profane human speculation, the Church encourages us to study devoutly the real nature of the threefold Name. We are not to pass it over as if it meant nothing. It is not "a vain thing for us; (Deut. xxxii. 47), which we may safely ignore. We ought to try our best to understand it and so to grow in the knowledge of God. All that the Church insists upon is that we should not approach the subject in the spirit of disputants, but with veneration and awe, and the desire simply to be taught of God. "The Catholic faith is this"—not that we define, or understand, or assent, or subscribe to anything, but—"that we *worship* one God in Trinity, and the Trinity in Unity."

§ 2.

In order to be assured that the doctrine is not a mere figment—that it cannot be dismissed unheard—two of the passages of Holy Scripture which bear upon the point may be examined. We find our Lord bidding His disciples to baptize all nations "into the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (S. Matt. xxviii. 19). It is obvious that He is not simply dictating a form of words to be used in the administration of Baptism. "Into the Name," He says, not "in" it. He sums up, in this brief description, the whole revelation which He came on earth to bring. That Name is the Gospel. Every spiritual privilege we enjoy is to be found in it. Our Baptism ushers us into it; for it puts us into a living con-

nexion with the God who is thus set forth, and who obviously wishes us to understand what the Name means. But we mark that our Lord does not speak of baptizing men into the "Names," as if they were plural. They cannot be dissociated from each other. The Name is one. Now, we could hardly imagine that Christ would use such a phrase, with its pregnant assertion of the unity of the Name, if "Father, Son, and Holy Ghost" represented notions so separate as those of God, and a human prophet, and a sanctifying influence. He must needs, in that case, have at least used the plural, or, as He often did when He would imply a distinction (S. Matt. xvii. 27; S. John xx. 17), repeated the word: "baptizing them into the Name of the Father, and into the Name of the Son, and into the Name of the Holy Ghost." By choosing without repetition to say "the Name," He teaches that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost are one. The revelation of each of the Three is the revelation of the other Two. They cannot be known apart. There are not three names of three separate beings; but the Name of the one God is, when written out full a threefold Name.

And yet throughout the New Testament the distinction between the Three is as clearly kept and brought out as Their unity. Thus our Lord at the Last Supper says to His disciples, "I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may be with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth" (S. John xiv. 16). Here the personal distinctions are clear and sharp. The Son prays; the Father

hears and gives; the Holy Ghost comes. The Son is not the same as the Father; for how could He intercede with Himself? The Father is not the same as the Spirit; for how could the Father "give" Himself in the sense which is here required, and which is afterwards explained by the word "send" (ver. 26)? The Spirit is not the same as the Son; for how could He in that case be "*another* Comforter," a permanent substitute for the Comforter whose brief sojourn was ending? If the Name into which we are baptized leads us to think of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost as an indivisible unity, this great promise of Christ as clearly sets before us the actions of a distinct Trinity. From the one we learn not to "divide the substance;" from the other, not to "confound the Persons." There are many other such passages in Holy Scripture, and these are only selected as samples in which all the Divine Three are, in a marked way, mentioned together. It will be felt that no other interpretation answers so simply and so deeply to the natural meaning of them as the Catholic interpretation does.

§ 3.

The Catholic interpretation of these and other passages guards the reader of Scripture from two opposite mistakes, either of which might easily be made without impugning the Godhead of the Son and Spirit, and either of which would cloud the clearness of our Christian hope. The first of these mistakes is known by the name of Tritheism, or supposing that

there are three Gods. This belief has never been formally maintained; but it is unconsciously the creed of a great many persons who have no wish to dispute the teaching of the Church. They think of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost as three separate Beings, possessed of the same glorious attributes, and bound together by mutual love and concord; accommodating and serviceable in many ways to each others' schemes, but independent of each other, and not necessary to one another's existence or completeness. For those whose thoughts take a tritheistic shape, the Son might (imaginably) cease to exist, and the Father still remain the same, intact; or a period could be conceived of at which no Holy Spirit was, and yet the Father and the Son existed in all their perfection without feeling much difference This is the form of thought and feeling which the *Quicumque* says is "forbidden by the Catholic religion." It would be "to say, There be three Gods, or three Lords." The Catholic religion asserts, with all sincerity and earnestness, the purest and loftiest monotheism. We have no need to explain anything away —we are in no degree juggling with words—when we repeat that God is One. We believe it without qualification or reserve. We rest upon this fact as the one great fundamental truth. We pray to be taught it as the highest work of the Spirit—

> "Teach us to know the Father, Son,
> And Thee, of both, to be but one."

Polytheism, of any form or kind, is only possible for men whose notions of what is meant by the word

"God" are entirely unlike ours. The Divine "substance" is not, like creaturely "substances," a substance which admits of being found in modified forms in a number of different beings. Humanity, with its limitations and imperfections, though one and the same substance everywhere, yet appears in countless separate specimens, each of whom is a man. But the very notion of Deity is such that we cannot conceive of it as possessed by more than one being. Two or three or more beings of infinite perfection, but mutually exclusive, cannot co-exist; for they must necessarily be limited by each other, which would be a contradiction in terms. Nothing of the kind is taught by the Christian doctrine of the Trinity.

For the threefold personality of God does not contradict His unity in any way; it shows the manner or condition of it. There are not three independent units side by side, on a level with each other, each almighty, each eternal, each finding in Himself the source of His own life. The unity between the three blessed Persons is not a similarity of character and qualities and powers, not a harmony of wills and purposes between three individuals belonging to the same species—three beings each of whom is a God. It is a true, though inexpressible, unity of Three Persons mutually depending upon each other and completing each other, indivisible, and incapable of existence apart from one another. The life of all Three is one and the same life, and it has but one source, not three. The very titles by which They are known to us imply this. They are not proper names,

like those of heathen divinities, but titles of relationship, which involve each other, and would be meaningless alone. Fatherhood is impossible without sonship, and sonship without fatherhood; a spirit (in the sense in which the word is applied to the Holy Ghost) is impossible without one whose spirit it is. The distinction between the Persons of the Trinity consists in this mutual relationship, and in that alone. God is one Being, who is Father, because He eternally finds Himself in a Son and Spirit, begotten of Him and proceeding from Him, not by a mere act of His will, but by the very necessity of His nature; and yet not by the mere necessity of His nature, but by the act of His loving will. It is He that is in Them, and They are in Him. Instead of being mutually exclusive, the Three are in reality mutually inclusive, and contained in each other, though never confused together. The Father never loses His identity in the Son, nor the Son in the Father, nor the Spirit in either; for if ever such a thing could imaginably take place, it would be the end of all the Three alike, since They only exist, as distinct persons, by virtue of Their relationship;—but it is numerically one and the same infinite Being whom we adore, whether we adore Him in His primal and original self as Father, or in the Son who reveals Him, or in the Spirit who communicates Him. For this reason it is that we are cautioned not to speak of three almighty ones, or three eternal ones, or (according to the teaching of S. Ambrose) even of three holy ones, although each of the Three is holy and eternal and almighty; because to speak in such

a manner would imply only a likeness between three separate specimens of a class which might without absurdity be thought more numerous.

§ 4.

The opposite mistake to Tritheism is that which is known to students of history by the name of Sabellianism. That name is derived from an early teacher who hoped to make the doctrine of the Holy Trinity easier by some such explanation as the following. We find Divine actions ascribed to a Father, a Son, and a Holy Spirit; yet, if God is one, all these names must be names for the one God. That one God, accordingly, must be pleased to act sometimes as Father, sometimes as Son, and sometimes as Spirit, sometimes as all three. For example, He acts as Father when He initiates or creates; He acts as Son when He puts into execution what He has, as Father, willed; He acts as Spirit when He imparts life and consciousness and moral freedom by infusing Himself into that which, as Father and Son, He has formed. But in Himself He is none of these. He passes from one to the other. The so-called "Persons" may come and go; they have no permanent being. They only express a threefold relation of the one God towards us, as displayed in three manners of dealing. It is but Sabellianism exaggerated to maintain that the persons are only notions of ours; and that, except in our perception, they would not exist at all—that they are but three phases or aspects of God, names for God as observed from different points of view;

God not being conscious of *being* Father, Son, and Spirit, but only of being *thought* so. According to this form of the theory, the difference between the persons only began when there was an *intelligent* creation to see the difference. But whether the difference depends on our perception, or whether the difference is now a real one to God Himself, in either case, if the creation were to pass away, the difference would pass away also, and only an abstract God be left, neither Father, nor Son, nor Holy Spirit. "The Unity (or rather, the Unit)," said Sabellius, "has come to be a Trinity by expansion." It is not, therefore, the original and eternal condition of God, but only began with the beginning of the world, and the Trinity would relapse into a Unity when no world was left for it to be exhibited in.

Such is roughly the Sabellian conception of the Trinity. But if it were the real meaning of the language of Scripture, then these names of Father, Son, and Spirit would be mere illusions. They would deceive us. The Scriptures would then be no true revelation of the nature of God; on the contrary, they would suggest what is actually false. We should be mocked by an appearance of mutual recognition and love between these imaginary—or, at best, transitory —"Persons." Instead of having to do with a real heavenly Father, made known to us in a real incarnate Son, by the illumination of a real indwelling Spirit, we should find ourselves face to face, after all, with an unintelligible, impersonal God, who had played upon us and confused our understandings for a time

by showing Himself to us under three disguises. If, according to the Catholic tradition, the distinction of the Three Persons is an eternal distinction, we can understand how God is indeed eternally love, within Himself, and not merely love towards us; but if the Persons are confounded, as Sabellius confounded them, then love can only have begun when there was a creation to be loved, and we have no guarantee that it will continue. And indeed, if God's eternal state is higher than any manifestations of Himself can be, we should imagine that the so-called Unity would have to reassert itself some time or another, and reabsorb the temporary Trinity under which it had been pleased to figure; and, as creation owes its origin to the act by which the Unity broke out into a Trinity, the return of the Godhead to its original Unity must needs carry with it the annihilation of all creaturely existence. A Sabellian conception of the Trinity weakens the hope of eternal life as much as the Catholic faith assures it. "This is the life eternal, that they may know Thee the only true God, and Him whom Thou didst send, even Jesus Christ" (S. John xvii. 3).

§ 5.

The two forms of thought which we have now considered agree in this, that they justly acknowledge, in Scripture, the Godhead of Father, Son, and Spirit, though Tritheism does so at the expense of the eternal Unity, and Sabellianism at the expense of the eternal Trinity. Arianism, on the other hand, in its

ancient and modern forms, including an immense range of opinions from Socinianism upwards, would cut the knot by denying the Godhead of the Second and Third Persons, and teaching that the Father alone is, in the full sense, God.

Such a system does not profess—at any rate in the first instance—to be derived from a large and careful study of Scripture. It is a philosophy. It comes to the Scripture already determined that there is but one God, and that the unity of God is incompatible with a Trinity of Persons. It rejects the Christian doctrine of the Godhead not on the plea that it is unscriptural, but on the plea that it is irrational. The *prima facie* view of many isolated texts would appear to favour this philosophy, and ingenuity can devise ways of dealing with other texts; but meanwhile the stronghold of the Arian position lies in its supposed logical simplicity. While the Catholic doctrine seems far-fetched and intricate, the Arian doctrine seems obvious and easy. Why cannot we believe, it is asked, in an Almighty Father, a personal, living, loving God, without adding a belief in a co-equal Son and Spirit?

Plausible as that theory seems, it involves graver difficulties than the revealed doctrine. Not only is the language of Scripture about the Son and the Holy Ghost unsatisfied by Arian explanations; but, on serious reflexion, the very notion of a personal God who is but one person becomes, as a philosophy, impossible to rest in intellectually. A man may fancy that he can think of such a thing, but he cannot

really. It is, in fact, unthinkable. Sabellianism here lays itself open to the same charge as Arianism. For we are bound to think of God as containing in His own Being all that is needed for His own perfection. He must be self-sufficing. We cannot imagine Him depending upon anything outside of Himself. Creation does not supply a void in the life of God, who must have been all that He now is before the world was, and can undergo no change or modification, for worse or for better, by reason of contact with the world. Now, so far as we can understand, a solitary unit could have no perceptions at all. Suppose a man to be born entirely without communion with the world around him, possessing, indeed, the faculties of sight, hearing, touch, taste, smell, but in some way sequestered from all objects on which to exercise those faculties, even the other parts of his own body being withdrawn from his sight and feeling; suppose, further, that no intellectual or spiritual touch from outside were allowed to come near him, although the man was naturally capable of converse with intellectual and spiritual beings; in short, suppose such a one to be absolutely isolated from all other things in existence;—is it conceivable that he should attain to consciousness of his own being, or, indeed, have any thoughts at all? We cannot imagine such a one to have even the perceptions of an animal. This, on the Arian supposition, was the condition of God before the worlds were made, or at least before the Son was begotten.

Still more difficult it is to reconcile the Arian sup-

position with the doctrine of the love of God. God is Love. That is His essence. And love is not love without exercise. Until it finds an object, there is but a capacity for love, not love itself. If God, therefore, had no object for His love until He had formed a creation, then God has not always been love—is not love by Himself in His own nature, but only (so to speak) accidentally, through the circumstances in which He finds Himself. And even now, if creation be the sole object of God's love, He cannot find in it adequate exercise for the whole of His love. For we have no reason to suppose that creation is, or can be, infinite. It may well be doubted whether the total fulness of God's being can ever be expressed in that which God makes. Therefore, although infinite love is at work in every part of creation, yet the exercise of it upon creation is not infinite. There remains behind an infinite reserve of love, which never can be expended to the blessed satisfaction of God upon any existing thing which falls short of Himself. And if we say that before creation was, the infinite love of God was infinitely expended upon Himself, we cannot but feel that such an expression would be shocking to all our best instincts, if God is a single person. A monstrous selfishness is the only picture which such language could suggest. It can only be morally true to say that God loves Himself, if there be eternally within the Divine nature a real distinction of Persons, whereby one Divine Person may lavish the infinite wealth of His love upon another Divine Person, who is infinitely worthy of receiving it.

It may, of course, be said that we are judging from what we know of limited, human, existence; and that what applies to a limited being need not perforce apply to an infinite, a Divine being. This is quite true; but at the same time, if man is made in the image of God, we have some right to form conceptions about His nature from our own, within due and reverent limits. And if, as a matter of fact, we are wrong in this particular conception, and it should at length burst upon us as true that God is a monad, a unit, but aware, before all creation, of His own existence, cognisant of the fulness of His powers, and eternally exercising a paternal love, we can only say that such a state of things would not only transcend our experience and thought, but that it would contradict it. Assuming the Arian belief to be true, nothing within our reach leads us in the direction of the true belief, or gives us any hint that may afterwards be developed into knowledge. Quite the contrary. Hard though it may be to understand the Church doctrine of the Trinity, it is much harder to conceive how God could be eternally Love, if He were a solitary unit.

§ 6.

It must not be supposed from what we have now said, or from anything that follows, that the belief in the Holy Trinity is derived from abstract reasonings of men, who found themselves unsatisfied by the notion of a God in one person. On the contrary, it is doubtful whether unaided speculation would ever have

ascertained the blessed truth which Christ has made known to us concerning the nature of God. We accept that truth as graciously revealed to us; and if any of the independent arguments which we use in elucidation of it fail—as well they may—to carry conviction with them, the revealed doctrine remains where it was, secure upon its Scriptural basis. Nevertheless, it is a satisfaction, if, when revelation has assured us of the fact, we can discern elsewhere any clues which might, if we had observed them, have guided us towards the fact.

We may, then, say that unless we are to take refuge in supposing that God is not self-sufficient, but is only, as Pantheism fancies, gradually coming to know Himself by means of the world, it would appear reasonable to postulate that God contains in His own being both subject and object. We human beings find ourselves set off by the world of which we form part; but we might expect to find that God is set off to Himself by something within His own nature,—that He is presented to His own contemplation. It may be surmised that there is some movement by which eternally He is reflected to Himself. God, we may suppose, must be ever inwardly projected, reproduced; or rather projecting, reproducing, Himself; not by a succession of fresh reproductions, for we have no right to say that with God there is any succession, but by one act of reproduction, complete and abiding, yet ever new, as if the one act were always in the living process of being performed. Thus there would ever confront Him somewhat which is at once Himself and not

Himself, which He can regard as embodying His own whole being, while still (in a sense) distinct from, and contrasted with, that which in the first instance is the "I," the "Ego," of God.

But if there is to be such a reflexion of God to Himself, the reflexion must needs be personal, in the same sense in which God Himself is personal. God would in no true way be represented to Himself by a mere picture or image in a mirror, so to speak, lifeless, and without power to respond to Him. It is inconceivable that there should be within the nature of God anything which is not life; and even if it were conceivable, a lifeless image of God would return to Him, not only an inadequate, but a totally false vision of Himself. That which truly reproduces God must be to Him, not "It," but "Thou;" and God in turn must be "Thou" to that which reproduces Him. And if God is truly to know Himself, the living Image which is before Him must be in every respect worthy of Him, that is, equal to Him. Any partial representation of God falls infinitely short of Him; and no number of finite and partial representations could mount up so as to supply the deficiency. No part of God's perfections and possibilities can at any time be absent from His consciousness; and they cannot be present to it in infinite detail without being present in their complete unity. Therefore of necessity that absolute reproduction by which God is set before His own eyes must be God, because, otherwise, God's self-knowledge would fall infinitely short of the truth. Nothing but God can represent God.

Thus we seem led even by reason, apart from revelation, to entertain the thought of a duality in the Divine nature. But we are unable to rest here. Although the next step in thought is less easy to express in words, the mind naturally demands a bond between the "I" and the "Thou," by which they may know themselves as "I" and "Thou." If we have been right thus far, there is in the Godhead the subject and the object; but how are they related to each other? Duality gives us only the notion of separation. If there were no other movement in the Divine nature but that whereby the first Person projects Himself into a second, the two might, for all we can see, be left for ever gazing upon each other, without knowing the difference between themselves, without mutual sympathy, and therefore without freedom of intercourse. A God whose nature was but dual could hardly, to our thinking, rise to as high a level of intelligence as man's. There might be mutual observation and attraction; but not the consciousness either of antithesis or of union. In order that God may be complete and self-sufficing, we feel a desire to see within the unity of His nature a process which establishes mutual knowledge, and along with mutual knowledge mutual love. We shall expect to find the movement whereby God places Himself before Himself, followed up by a movement whereby He makes Himself fully known, in all His loveableness and wisdom, to the object thus set before Him, and receives back the response of that object. And we may perhaps dimly apprehend how this mediation between the Divine "I" and "Thou"

should itself be fitly the work of a Person. It is not, like will, or intelligence, a *faculty* of God, which can, in thought, be detached from the Divine essence; it is a vital process in the very being of God, without which He cannot be conceived of as existing. It involves nothing less than the whole internal relation of God to Himself. And as we saw that the object in which God is reproduced to Himself must be in all points equal with God, so the Person who mediates between the two must be in all points the equal of either, or He could not adequately interpret the one to the other. It seems to put the completing touch to the glory of the Divine life when we see Person and Person eternally made known to each other, in their difference and in their unity, by a Person to whom both are absolutely known, and who is absolutely one with both.

§ 7.

Such guesses of the natural reason—though we could not safely build upon them without further light—prepare us to receive with adoring reverence the glimpses of the inner life of God accorded to us in Holy Scripture. As might be expected, the Bible speaks most often of the active relations of God towards creation, and shows us what is called by theologians the "economic" or "practical Trinity," that is, the threefold way in which God deals with us. But here and there we are shown (as it were) an opened heaven, and the Godhead is revealed in its "essential Trinity."

God is seen to have been eternally and absolutely "the Father," before time began. It is not a title given to Him because, as matter of history, the life of us all can be traced back to Him. That name belongs to Him, not because He always prospectively had the capacity, the desire, the will, to become Father. In the eternal days before creation He was actually Father, by the true communication of all His own glorious nature to One who was perfectly "the Son." That Son's existence constitutes Him Father; and it was not when the Son became incarnate, nor even when the Son began to fashion the world, that God acquired fatherhood by Him. "I glorified Thee upon the earth, having perfected the work which Thou hast given Me that I should do;" so says the Incarnate Son, looking back upon His earthly life; and then He continues with a lengthening retrospect: "And now glorify Thou Me, O Father, at Thine own side, with the glory which I had, before that the world was, beside Thee" (S. John xvii. 4, 5). Long before the Son stooped from heaven to the task of redemption,—long before the immeasurable cycles began through which the Son was framing the worlds,—God is shown to us as dwelling in no solitary grandeur. One who calls Him "Father" is in His company, and who establishes the truth of the title by sharing with Him the full possession of that glory, which created things may "see," but none but God can "have."

No less clear is the witness of the solemn sentences at the beginning of S. John's Gospel. The

language is different, though the Persons spoken of are the same. The Son and Father, in the glory of Their common nature, are now described as "the Word" and "God." "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (S. John i. 1). A word is a thought launched forth from the thinker's mind, making clear to himself and to others what he thinks. As the name of "Son" brings out more prominently the notion of personality and love, so that of "Word" brings out the notion of ordered ideas, distinctly and rationally perceived. God has not many words, but one Word, who is the utterance and expression of the whole mind and will of God. And that whole mind and will of God was already articulate and complete before any single act of creation had taken place. When creation began to be, it found the Word already in existence, and it owed its origin to His agency. "In the beginning the Word was." But it is not enough for us to know that He "was." Had the Evangelist stopped here, we should have been free to fancy that the Word was but some faculty or element in the person of God the Father. But he proceeds to teach us the mystery of a second personal subsistence in active relation to the first: "And the Word was with God." The preposition is not the same as that employed in the last passage under consideration. There the Son was shown to us in simple juxtaposition with the Father. They were together, in the presence of each other. Here we have a further thought. Two may be together without

taking notice of each other; but this preposition shows us, if we may say so, the *attitude* of the second Person to the first. Quite literally it is, "And the Word was towards God." His face is not outwards, so to speak, as if He were merely revealing, or waiting to reveal, God to the creation. His face is inwards. His whole person is directed towards God, motion corresponding to motion, thought to thought. He appears to find His very being in the intensity of bliss with which He receives all that passes in the mind and heart of God. In Him God stands revealed to Himself in all the inexhaustible possibilities of His wisdom. And lest it should for a moment appear as if this perfect revelation could be found in some being shot forth outside the Divine life itself, of lower nature than that of Him who is revealed, the Apostle adds, "And the Word was God." The self-revelation is completed within the unity of the Godhead by the mutual knowledge and love of more than one Person.

So again, to take one more instance, another Apostle opens to us a view of the eternal place of the Holy Ghost within the life of God, apart from the created universe. "The Spirit searcheth all things, even the depths of God For who of men knoweth the things of the man save the spirit of the man which is in him? So also the things of God none hath known save the Spirit of God" (1 Cor. ii. 10, 11). The spirit of the man is his own ultimate consciousness, whereby he knows about himself what no one else can know unless he chooses to tell it. So also the Spirit of God is the ultimate consciousness of

God, whereby He knows Himself. That Spirit is not merely an emanation from the Divine nature, working upon the world, but a movement within the Divine nature, returning upon itself. The distinctness of the Spirit's person is not, indeed, so clearly brought out here as elsewhere; for if this passage stood alone, we might even, perhaps, have pressed too far the analogy of the place of the Spirit in the Divine subject and in the human. But all the more unmistakeably this passage teaches that the Spirit is of the very essence of the God whose Spirit He is, so one with Him that God cannot be imagined without Him. His perfect Deity is testified to by the infinite reach and range of His activity. The spirit of man has but a limited knowledge of the things of the man, and there are mysteries in his nature and character and career which he cannot now explore, and perhaps never will be able. But the Spirit of God finds nothing even in God which baffles His scrutiny. His "search" is not a seeking for knowledge yet beyond Him; it is a penetrating, comprehensive cognisance of all that is in God, even to the depths. If the act of search reveals a personal consciousness in the Spirit, the extent of the search involves His true Godhead. Nothing but God could search the depths of God.

§ 8.

The manner of the unity of the Three blessed Persons is, and we may well think that it must always be, beyond the reach of our intelligence, although it cannot be contradictory to our reason. The only

approach which we can make to a right understanding of what is revealed lies in the doctrine of the derivation of the Son and Spirit from the person of the Father. Even careful divines are not always free from ambiguity on this point. Sometimes, from their language, the learner might imagine that there was something still in the background, in which Father, Son, and Spirit alike have the foundation of Their being. One might fancy that they spoke, (somewhat like the Sabellians) of one called "God," behind the Three Persons in which He is known or of which He is composed; or of an abstract substance called "the Godhead," wholly entering, indeed, into all Three Persons, but in thought separable from all Three.

Such a conception would be contrary to the language of Scripture. In the New Testament the name "God"—"God" *as* a Name, "God" with the definite article and nothing else (ὁ Θεός)—is absolutely identified with the Person of the Father. It is never used of the Son or of the Spirit. It is never used of the blessed Trinity in general, without person specified. While "the Lord" most frequently denotes the Son, but sometimes the Father (S. James iii. 9, R.V.), sometimes the Spirit (2 Cor. iii. 17, 18), "God" is always the Father. "To us there is but one God, the Father" (1 Cor. viii. 6). Whenever the word is used of the Son or of the Spirit, it is used as a predicate, or with some descriptive and qualifying addition. "My Lord and my God" (S. John xx. 28). "The blessed hope and appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ" (Titus ii. 13).

"The Word was with God (πρὸς τὸν Θεόν), and the Word (Θεὸς ἦν) was God" (S. John i. 2). "Christ, who is over all, God blessed for ever" (Rom. ix. 5). The Son is God, but God is not the Son. The Spirit is God, but God is not the Spirit. The Father is God, and God is the Father. We can speak of God and His Son; we could never speak of God and His Father.

Thus the unity of God is not to be looked for in the bare notion of a community of "substance" between the Three Divine Persons. Unity of substance would not of itself exclude Tritheism, any more than it excludes the notion of multitude among us men, who all share the same "substance" and yet are independent units. God's unity is to be found in the relation of the Son and Spirit with the Father, from whom They derive. The Father—God—is the sole Fountain of all being, uncreated as well as created. The well-spring of His life is not in some abstract "Godhead" beyond Him; it is in Himself. The well-spring of the life of the Son and Spirit is not in Themselves, but in Him. There is a sense, indeed, in which They "have life in Themselves;" but They have it in Themselves by "gift" from Him (S. John v. 26). Not that, like creatures, They live by a gift that might have been withheld—by a fiat of His will. They are necessary to the very notion of God. The Father would not be Himself without Them; God would not be the God He is. And yet the existence of the Father—of God, that is—does not depend upon the Son and Spirit in the same way as

Theirs depends upon Him. "The Father is made of none, neither created, nor begotten," and, it might be added, "nor proceeding." On the other hand, "I live," said our Lord, not speaking of His human life only—"I live because of the Father" (S. John vi. 57).

So the equality of the Son and Spirit with the Father is not a dead parity. "In this Trinity none is afore or after another," indeed, in point of time, for "the whole Three Persons are co-eternal together;" there never was a moment when God was incomplete, as He would have been without Son or Spirit. "None is greater or less than another," in point of nature, attributes, or character, for "the whole Three Persons are co-equal;" God would be still incomplete if Son or Spirit were not in everything "such as the Father is." And yet the ancient Greek teachers made no mistake of doctrine when they interpreted the saying of our Lord, "The Father is greater than I" (S. John xiv. 28), to refer to the Father and the Son in Their eternal relations, not to the humiliation of the Son in the days of His flesh. The very fact of the comparison being made points, as they observe, to the identity of nature in the Two; but it reveals clearly the subordination of the second Person to the first. That subordination in no way involves (as perhaps an unguarded use of the word might suggest) a position for the Son resembling that of the creatures; for we are to "honour the Son even as we honour the Father" (S. John v. 23); but within the unapproachable Godhead the Son takes the second place, not the first. He is "equal to the Father as touching His

Godhead," but He is "inferior to the Father," not only "as touching His manhood," but also as touching His Sonship. There is nothing in the Father which He does not bestow upon the Son by the very act of begetting Him, for fatherhood is the transmission to another of the parent's own nature; but there is nothing in the Son which He does not owe to the Father. He has no initiative of His own, either in thought or in action; nor has the Holy Ghost. The Son's life is a life of eternal obedience, which makes up its joy. The Father alone has the initiative. "The Son can do nothing of Himself, except He seeth the Father doing it" (S. John v. 19). "As I hear, I judge" (ver. 30). "The Spirit of truth shall guide you unto all the truth; for He shall not speak from Himself, but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak" (S. John xvi. 13).

Nor may we think that in this way the power or wisdom of the Son and Spirit is limited. Not at all; these words only explain the mode and condition of Their limitless thought and action; and they are followed up by sayings like these: "What things soever He"—the Father—"doeth, these the Son also doeth in like manner; for the Father loveth the Son, and showeth Him all things that Himself doeth" (S. John v. 19). And again, "All things that the Father hath are Mine; therefore said I that He"—the Spirit of truth—"taketh of Mine, and shall show it unto you" (S. John xvi. 15). There is but one cognition in the Divine Being, although the Father, the Son, and the Spirit partake in the cognition in different ways.

There is but one movement of will in whatever the blessed Trinity wills, although each of the Three joins in the movement of will in a manner peculiar to Himself. Whatever any one of the Trinity does, the act is common to all the Trinity, although each does it in a mode incommunicable to the other Two.

This it is which makes, we may say, the true oneness of the Eternal Trinity. God is Love; and the union of the Three is not one of barren necessity. It is a free and living union, in which all are bound together by an absolute outpouring of each to other in love. We may think of the joy which the Father has in giving,—in communicating without reserve, to the Son, "all the fulness" (Col. i. 19) of His being, draining Himself, to the very last ray of glory, to bestow it all on Him, and finding it all the more His own because lavished freely on the Only Begotten. And it is the joy of the Son to receive,—to feel the infinite flow of the Father's love concentrated in Himself; and, in the gratitude which must always be a part of filial love, we may understand, to some extent, the gladness with which He welcomes most those wishes of the Father which will cost most to Himself, the pure pride with which He reflects that He mixes nothing of His own with what the Father gives Him. The Spirit likewise has His joy in making known,—in perfecting fellowship and keeping the eternal love alive by that incessant sounding of the deeps which makes the heart of the Father known to the Son, and the heart of the Son to the Father. None of the Three adorable Persons has, or ever had,

or ever could have, or ever could wish to have, anything of His own, peculiar to Himself, not common to the whole Trinity,—except, of course, that special relationship to the others which constitutes His distinctive personality. It is the glory of Them all to be One, not by a mere metaphysical identity of nature, but also (if we may dare to say so) by a moral living for and in each other, in a mutual devotion such as serves as an example for men. "The glory which Thou hast given Me I have given them; that they may be one, even as We are one." "That they all may be one, even as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be in Us" (S. John xvii. 22, 21).

Chapter III.

Creation through the Word.

The Christian doctrine of Creation contrasted with Pantheism—God's Purpose in Creation—The Christian doctrine contrasted with Deism—Source of Creation in the Eternal Word—Immanence of the Word as a principle of Order—Doctrine of the Angels—Science and Revelation—The Mosaic account of Creation as a progressive Work—Man the crown of Creation.

§ 1.

The doctrine of the Holy Trinity leads in two directions to a true view of Creation. In the first place, by helping us to see that God is independent of all external to Himself, and that He already has within Himself all that He needs, for life, for consciousness, for love, for bliss, it makes us perceive that Creation is indeed Creation. The world had once a definite beginning; at the first beat of time it sprang into a course of historical existence. And the act of Creation is one of pure free-will. There was no outward compulsion upon God to create; no blind instinct from within impelled Him to do it, without His knowing why. It produced no change in His internal life He had ever been exactly what He is now and ever will be, world without end. No new powers came

to Him through the action, nor was He feeling His way to a more vivid sense of life. The unique language used by S. James, apparently, of the second creation, applies also to the first, when he says, "Because it liked Him (βουληθείς)"—or rather, "by an act of liking"—"He brought us forth by a word of truth" (S. James i. 18). He knew what He was about, and He need never have created had He not chosen to do so; it was an exhibition of His sovereign and irresponsible pleasure. And that which He created forms no part of Himself. However closely the Creator may connect Himself with His creature there is no passing of the one into the other. Though God, the Father of all, is "through all" and "in all," nevertheless He is "above all" (Eph. iv. 6). He stands well off from the world, and the world from Him; and although it is His continual presence in all things which sustains them in being, and without Him they could not be, yet they are not mere phantom existences, wonderful puppets playing in His fancy and made conscious of their own and others' playing; but He has given to them a real substantive being of their own, a true creaturely dignity which the Creator Himself respects. Thus the doctrine of the Trinity frees us from the confusions of Pantheism, by which in one way or another God and the world are mixed together and identified.

§ 2.

The motive of God in creation was undoubtedly benevolent. As S. Athanasius says, "He grudged

existence to nothing." If we are the handiwork of God, we are the handiwork of love. God made us because He wished to do us good, and had a magnificent "purpose" for us in view. Knowing the wealth of wisdom and beauty and love that was in Himself and His Son and Holy Ghost, He could not refrain from sharing the pure enjoyment of it with beings other than Himself. In this sense we may even say that God's nature compelled Him to create, for had He not done so, a love could have been imagined more perfect than was displayed. At least it was becoming for a perfect love to create, and what becomes Him, God does. Acute thinkers, indeed, like John Stuart Mill, have doubted whether benevolence towards His creatures was the sole or the main purpose in the Creator's mind. Mill's reason for the doubt was the incidental misery and pain in nature; but he should have seen that benevolence is very different from love. Love is prepared to take deeper and sterner measures than benevolence, which is, by itself, a shallow thing. It may, however, be conceded that the creation of the world is not due to a love which has no other object besides the world. We are plainly told in one passage that all things exist, not only by means of the Father, but "for His sake" (Heb. ii. 10, δι' ὅν). As plainly, though in a somewhat different form, we are told that all things have been created by means of the Son of God's love, "and with a view to Him" (Col. i. 16, εἰς αὐτόν). And again, in an ascription where it is difficult to tell whether the Father or the Son is meant, we read, "For out of Him, and by means

of Him, and with a view to Him, are all things" (Rom. xi. 36, εἰς αὐτόν). Assuredly God created us for His own glory. We are instruments for the manifestation of His character. But the two ends are one and the same. If the Father created the world to give it as a kingdom to the Son of His love, over which the Son might reign as its Firstborn, and if the Son did His part in the creation in order to reveal by it the glory of His Father, the interests of the world itself were in no wise neglected, nor could they be. The true glory of God could never have been revealed through a world for which He did not care. There might have been an exhibition of skill and might, but not of love, and love—wise and righteous love—is the true glory of God. The more God loves the world, the more deeply must He reveal Himself to it; and this, so far as we can see, He could never have done in a government of mere benevolence, from which all pain and suffering were excluded. Nor can we shut off the second creation from the first; and the second creation leaves no room to doubt our Maker's motive. The Father and the Son glorify each other, and the Holy Spirit glorifies both, by vying as it were with each other to exhibit the love which each bears to the world. It was an act of self-sacrifice when God vouchsafed to give birth to a free universe; and in proportion to the depths of the self-sacrifice was the joy which attended it. "The glory of the Lord"—that display of His love for which we were created—"shall endure for ever; the Lord shall rejoice in His works" (Ps. civ. 31).

§ 3.

At the same time as the doctrine of the Trinity frees us from Pantheism, it frees us also from the difficulties of the opposite error of Deism. Deism (along with modern Judaism and Islam) not only puts a great chasm between the world, as at present existing, and its Maker, but it offers no help towards understanding how the world ever came to be made at all. The problem, when seriously considered, is by no means an easy one. All the early Gnostic systems sprang out of a desire to solve it. However a Supreme Being—presumed to be a unit—could suddenly find himself with a material world under his hand, the Gnostic thinkers could not divine; nor can any one else. The contrast, they saw, was too violent. Flights of emanations and æons were imagined, each in succession coming lower, until one had been produced—at a great distance from the abstract and absolute God—debased enough to be what was called the Demiurge, or the common World-maker. Gnosticism, however, was wrong on two cardinal points. It was wrong in considering the world unworthy to be the work of the Most High; and it did not see (any more than Arianism) that the very noblest of emanations must, in fact, stand as far beneath the absolute God as any weed or stone. In trying to express the distance between God and the world, it did, in fact, bring God hopelessly down; for the notion of any sort of demigod can only be entertained by those whose thoughts of God are low.

The real difference comes in between God and what is not God. The things which are not God may rightly be compared among themselves, and may be arranged in a true hierarchy; but when compared with God Himself, one thing bears the comparison no better than another. Nothing created can, in reality, fill the gap, and the Gnostic fabrications leave but a form of Deism after all. The only doctrine which affords any true help towards connecting God and the world is that same Christian doctrine of the Trinity which makes so sharp a difference between them.

§ 4.

The teaching of Holy Scripture concerning the Logos, or Word of God, has already been touched upon. Whatever were the sources, Alexandrine or Palestinian, to which S. John's language is historically to be traced, we see in the prologue to his Gospel the truth which gives the starting-point for creation. God is no sterile and motionless unit. He has from all eternity within Himself a rich fulness of life and thought, in which His whole heart finds a satisfying exercise. This fulness of His life and thought is in the Word, and inseparable from the Word, so that, on the one hand, no thought or movement of will can take place in God without taking place through the Word, nor, on the other hand, can the Word ever have been an empty, meaningless word, destitute of that fulness of life and thought. God cannot be conceived of as having at any time been silent and mute towards Himself, holding no converse

with Himself; but this converse He does and must hold by His Word, which is at once spoken and speaking. The Word is spoken, inasmuch as the thought is not primarily the Word's own thought, but springs out of God. The Word is speaking, inasmuch as the thought is appropriated by a true personal energy in the Word that is spoken, and is returned in its fulness to Him who spoke it, by means of that Spirit in whom God and His Word are joined. It seems probable that "Word," spoken and speaking, more truly represents the biblical conception of the "Logos" than the more technical term "Reason." "Word" is a larger conception than that of "Reason." It gives a more objective reality to the Logos, as truly uttered, and standing in a certain sense outside of Him who utters it. And at the same time the thought of "the Word" includes all that the narrower term contains. Speech is not possible without reason. The Word, therefore, is the summing up and, if the metaphor may be allowed, the precipitation of all the infinite multiplicity of the thoughts of God, in a harmonious and logical perfection. That inexhaustible wealth of ideas which God possesses does not float vaguely and disconnectedly—in solution, so to speak—through His mind; but, in His Word, it is formed into a true *cosmos*, an ordered kingdom, an ever-replenished and perfectly arranged living treasure-house, which the Holy Ghost eternally uses in every part for the refection of the Father and the Son. The act by which the Father begets the Son is the act by which He gains the true grasp of His thought;

and, conversely, the process by which He realises the total fertility of His resources, gives birth to Him who is "God Only-born" (S. John i. 18, the true reading and translation).

Thus it is that the Eternal Son is "the Beginning of the creation of God" (Rev. iii. 14), not as being the first thing created, but as being the deep principle by which any creation becomes possible. "By Him all things were made." His everlasting birth is the first step towards creation. Among the glorious thoughts which were included before all time in the revelation of God to Himself in the Word, was the thought of an universe of things. He perceived Himself able to give existence to something which should be not God. The image of a whole world of various beings, linked together in a wonderful order, and all looking to Him as their Author, was ever present to His mind. That "manifold wisdom" (Eph. iii. 10), which has been historically displayed in the world and the Church, was already present as an "eternal purpose in Christ Jesus our Lord." In a tranquil and natural manner the author of the Book of Proverbs runs on describing the activities of Wisdom —which is one aspect of the Word—before and in creation, as if he had scarcely observed the difference. "The Lord possessed Me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills,

was I brought forth: while as yet He had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world." Thus far Wisdom is speaking of Her part in the uncreated world. Without Her the "works" cannot be planned; but in Her they clearly are present as possibilities, and as intended to be produced. They are already contemplated as true ideas, before they become outward realities. Though not yet made, they are ready and waiting to be made. But the point of transition is scarcely marked, as the Speaker continues, "When He prepared the heavens, I was there: when He set a compass upon the face of the depth: when He established the clouds above: when He strengthened the fountains of the deep: when He gave to the sea His decree, that the waters should not pass His commandment: when He appointed the foundations of the earth: then I was by Him, as one brought up with Him: and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him, rejoicing in the habitable part of His earth; and My delights were with the sons of men" (Prov. viii. 22—31).

The thoughts of God, as they confront Him in the Eternal World, are not mere imaginations; they have a true, though not yet a separate, existence. And so the view which is implicitly contained in Solomon's praise of Wisdom is twice set before us in so many words in the New Testament, though hidden from the ordinary English reader behind inferior readings and punctuations. There can be little doubt that we ought, in S. John's prologue, to read, "That which hath been made was life in Him" (S. John i. 3, 4).

There was no sudden and violent apparition of a world unthought of before and unprepared for. Before it came into a separate existence of its own, that world, which we now observe as having begun to be, was already to be found, completely thought out, in the fulness of the life of the Word. To God it already *was*. It was not strictly made of nothing. It did not come out of a dead nonentity, for already it "was life in the Word."

In the Apocalypse the same thought is once more expressed. When the elders shall at last witness the completed adoration of the four living things which symbolize the animated creation, they will, it says, fall down before God, saying, "Worthy art Thou, our Lord and our God, to receive the glory and the honour and the power: for Thou didst create all things, and because of Thy will *they were*, and were created" (Rev. iv. 11). Origen was, indeed, wrong when he spoke of creation as an eternal fact, like the generation of the Son, but only because he confounded the two modes of existence together, and so lost the true beginning of the world. "All things were" because they were present to the mind of God in His Word. It was not by any necessity that they were there, but "because of His will." The thought of God is free. But God was not content to have them exist solely to His own consciousness. In His love and condescension He gave them being, and, when it pleased Him, "they were created." At a word they sprang from the womb of His thought into an actual life of their own.

§ 5.

As before time the ideas of things contained in the Word were ranged in due order, so it was also in the actual production of the things. They did not issue forth, all ready-made at once, and at haphazard; nor were the materials thrown out to fashion themselves for themselves as best they might. The Word, in whom they had been life before, was still present as their guiding principle. Not only were "all things made through Him," but "apart from Him was nothing made, no not one" (S. John i. 3). His immanence, that is, was felt, pervading all, sustaining all, or "bearing the universe along by the utterance of His power" (Heb. i. 3), and giving unity and system to all; for "in Him the universe consists," or "holds together" (Col. i. 17). The invariable sequences of nature, the regularity and method of all her processes, the uniformity with which she works, the adaptation of things to their environment, the laws of gravitation, the laws of number and geometry, and all the mysteries which science developes and explores, above all, the progress and rise which have been observed both in the world and in man—inexplicable if there were no Divine power behind them—are expressions of the presence of that Word, or Wisdom, which "reacheth from one end to another,' both in time and space, "mightily and sweetly ordering all things" (Wisd. viii. 1), and making all nature to be a visible word of God—a true, though partial, revelation of His mind.

§ 6.

Holy Scripture would lead us to suppose that the material heavens and earth were not the first product of the creative energy of the Word. A chorus of angelic beings witnesses and salutes the first appearance of the newly founded world. "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? Who hath laid the measures thereof, or who hath stretched the line upon it? Who laid the corner-stone thereof, when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?" (Job xxxviii. 4—7). It is precarious, of course, to press the language of such a poetical apostrophe for purposes of doctrine; but what we learn elsewhere of the relation of angels to the world makes it seem natural that the purely spiritual creatures should be the first to come into being. For they are not the outcome of the different parts of the universe which they represent and influence—generated by the growth and development of the things. Rather, we may consider them as a kind of spiritual substratum, in which the material things are planted. They form a preparatory creation, to receive what is to follow. It is, perhaps, for this reason that, in the vision of Jacob, and our Lord's interpretation of it, the angels are seen ascending first, and descending after: their natural place is in the world below (S. John i. 51).

Our knowledge of what angels are must necessarily be very limited. Our sole authority regarding them is Holy Scripture; and in endeavouring to group to-

gether some of the notices of them scattered on the face of the Bible, we do well to remember that much of the Bible language is symbolical, and is not intended for the purpose of teaching us the natural history of spiritual beings, any more than of earthly ones.

What the numbers of the angels may be we can only guess; but there seems nothing unreasonable in the suggestion that everything has its spiritual counterpart, so to speak, and that, as Origen felt, not a plant of grass or a fly is without its "angel." We find operations of nature of greater and of less magnitude spoken of as committed to these spiritual agents. We read of an angel "that hath power over fire" (Rev. xiv. 18), and of angels "holding the four winds of the earth" (Rev. vii. 1). The figurative language of the Apocalypse reproduces that of earlier books of the Bible. "He maketh winds His angels, a flash of fire His ministers" (Ps. civ. 4). "He rode upon a cherub, and did fly: He came flying upon the wings of the wind" (Ps. xviii. 10). It is but a gloss, but we may believe it to be a true gloss, when the action of an intermittent and healing spring is attributed to an angel (S. John v. 4). An angel's descent caused the earthquake on the morning of our Lord's resurrection. The control of diseases, especially of an epidemic sort, is distinctly assigned to angels. An angel smites Herod with his horrible malady; angels annihilate the hosts of Sennacherib, and are seen with outstretched hand over the plague-threatened city of Jerusalem. They seem, with their native regularity, well fitted to preside over the undeviating course of

nature, and are inseparably linked to it. Hence, in the mystic throne upon which the Almighty moves in Ezekiel's vision, symbolical of the universe, the winged living creatures are vitally connected with a complicated set of wheels, themselves full of eyes, and penetrated by "the spirit of the living creature" (Ezek. i. 20). Later speculations have not hesitated to find an angel of the sun, and angels of the planets; nor is there anything improbable in the thought that such living agencies regulate the movements of the heavenly bodies, and that they may even have taken an active part in developing both them and the things of earth out of the primordial chaos.

But it is in connexion with man that their true significance comes out. All nature exists for man; and the spirits, greater and less, which are so bound up with nature, find their true vocation in ministering to man. It seems probable that each man has his special attendant spirit, representing him before God, and in some ways acting on his behalf among men, so that it is difficult sometimes to distinguish between the man's own self-conscious "spirit" or "ghost," and his "angel." "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I tell you that their angels in heaven unceasingly look upon the face of My Father which is in heaven" (S. Matt. xviii. 10). "She ran in and announced that Peter stood before the door; . . but they said, It is his angel" (Acts xii. 15). However this may be—whether one particular guardian is for life attached to every man, or many guardians at once, or different guardians in succession and in bands,

any of which would fit the language of the Bible—it is indubitable that men who are endeavouring to rise to the God-given dignity of human nature are special objects of the uninterrupted care of angels. "Are they not all ministerial spirits, perpetually sent forth on service for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation?" (Heb. i. 14). If the word rendered "ministerial" (λειτουργικά) makes us think of their disciplined and regular movements, as of some great temple-ritual in which they bear their several parts, the word for "service" (εἰς διακονίαν) brings out their busy and lowly attendance upon the needs of men. They supply, whether unseen or on occasion seen, their bodily wants. They shield them from accident (Ps. xci. 11, 12). They protect them from fire and from wild beasts (Dan. iii. 28; vi. 22). They can bring them food (1 Kings xix. 6), or turn the darkness into light, or open the iron gates of a prison for them (Acts xii. 7, 10). By what means the spiritual can work such effects upon the material we cannot tell, not even knowing by what means our own spirits work upon our fleshly frames; but if it be true, as already suggested, that the ordinary operations of nature are under their supervision, we need not be astonished at these special acts of power over physical objects. Still, it is, perhaps, easier to understand how they can be the bearers of spiritual messages from God to men—of promise (Gen. xxii. 15; S. Luke ii. 10), of rebuke (Judg. ii. 1), of warning (S. Matt. ii. 13), of enlightenment (Dan. viii. 16), of comfort (Dan. x. 18); and how they can join in our public worship with satisfaction or the contrary

(1 Cor. xi. 10), and can carry the aspirations and prayers of men up to God (Rev. viii. 3).

The angels are pure spirits, without form, though various symbolical shapes express them when they are manifested to the senses: they appear sometimes as young men; sometimes as horses of fire and chariots of fire (Zech. i. 8; 2 Kings vi. 17); sometimes, it may be, as birds (1 Kings xvii. 6). So far as we are aware, they have no manner of propagation. For this reason it is, probably, that they are called "sons of God," as owing their existence to Him alone, without the instrumentality of parentage (S. Luke xx. 36). They are not bound together by a unity of substance such as binds together men, or any other race of animals, but stand or fall purely as individuals. They cannot, strictly speaking, be divided into species or kinds. Perhaps, therefore, no distinction other than one of function is contained in the names of Cherubim and Seraphim—the "Forms," which appear to be the most closely allied to the physical creation —and the "Burning ones," whose life appears to be entirely occupied with adoring contemplation, forming, as it were, a body-guard round the immediate Presence, to burn up any evil thing which might approach (Isa. vi. 2).

The pure spirituality of the angels, by virtue of which they are able to hear and contemplate God, through the Eternal Word, immediately, gives them great power and great dignity (Ps. ciii. 20; 2 S. Pet. ii. 11). Their terrible and imperious strength is the first thing observable in their apparitions. The prophet

by the river Hiddekel (Dan. x. 8), and the Roman soldiers at the sepulchre of our Lord, alike swooned at the sight of an angel; S. John, in the Apocalypse, fell worshipping at the angel's feet. The spiritual might and burning indignation in the face of S. Stephen reminded the guilty Sanhedrin of an angelic vision. Even in their tenderest ministrations, their strength comes prominently into view. Daniel confesses that the angel's touch has strengthened him (Dan. x. 19); and when our Blessed Lord was seen to "reel amid that solitary fight" in the garden, the angel which appeared to Him did not merely soothe or encourage Him, but—the word is a remarkable word (ἐνισχύων)—communicated to Him some inward supporting force. In comparison with the angels, man, in his present state, seems but a feeble creature. He is subject for the time being to their control, and they rule over him. Even the Incarnate Word Himself, during His earthly sojourn, was "made lower a short space than the angels" (Heb. ii. 7), who governed, in some sense, while they waited upon Him, as they do with other men. In all their communications with men they show that they mean to be believed and obeyed. "I am Gabriel, that standeth by in the presence of God; . . . and lo, thou shalt be mute, and not able to speak, until the day that these things shall come to pass, because thou believest not my words" (S. Luke i. 19, 20). They are not to be trifled with, any more than physical nature itself, and cannot leave the authoritative station in which the Eternal Word has ranged them.

The angels are not a mere multitude of isolated spirits. They are camps, hosts, armies—Mahanaim, Sabaoth (Gen. xxxii. 2; Ps. xxiv. 10). There are Archangels as well as angels. S. Paul and S. Peter half adopt a still larger nomenclature of angelic ranks, though it is plain that they only borrow the nomenclature from teachers whose teaching they are in part combating. "Principalities and Authorities" is a frequent phrase with them; and at other times S. Paul adds the titles of Thrones and Dominions and Powers (Eph. i. 21; Col. i. 16). The extent of their sway it is impossible to guess; but they appear in some way to have not only individual persons, but large bodies of men and whole nations, subject to them. There are "Princes" of Persia and Grecia, as well as of the Chosen People (Dan. x. 20, 21); and in something of the same way, it may be, the seven Churches of Asia are represented as under the management of seven "angels," whose character is mysteriously one with that of the Churches under them. Their power over men is not such as to destroy human free will and responsibility; yet it forms one of the many conditions under which our freedom acts. Those great moulding influences of which we speak under such terms as the "spirit of the age" or "national character" may well be due to the unseen "Principalities" under whom we live.

Some Christian thinkers go so far as actually to identify these influences with the angelic agencies, at the cost, as it would seem, of the personal consciousness and will of the angels. Our acquaintance with

the nature of pure spirits is so slight that we may hardly deny the theory; but the personal names given to some of the blessed angels appear to teach that some, at any rate, are more than vague and semi-conscious influences. Besides the apocryphal Raphael, who guides Tobias, and Uriel, who communes with Esdras, there is Gabriel, who visits Daniel and Zacharias, and heralds the Incarnation to the blessed Virgin. At the head of the whole spiritual hierarchy stands a great being to whom, in a special way, the championship of the Chosen People and its leaders was committed. His name—Michael, "Who is like God?"—proclaims the unimaginable distance between the mightiest of created essences and the Creator. Though these mighty spirits are true "kings (*βασιλεύοντες*)" and "lords (*κυριεύοντες*)" (1 Tim. vi. 15), yet high above them is that Firstborn of all creation in whom they were created (Col. i. 16)—whom S. John saw riding forth to battle with His name on thigh and garment, "King of kings, and Lord of lords," while a higher title declares Him to be the "Word of God," in whom is made the complete revelation of God to His creatures, and a third name, still more august, is there, expressing, not His office or His work, but His true personal glory—"a name which no man knoweth, but He Himself" (Rev. xix. 16, 13, 12).

§ 7.

To gain a knowledge of the history of the material "heavens and earth," theology must sit at the feet

of science. We have to look to man's investigation rather than to God's revelation. Or rather, we look for God's revelation to come to us in a different form. For if the reasoning faculty in man is (as S. Athanasius teaches) "a kind of shadow of the Divine Word," and if the order in nature is also due to the immanent energy of the Divine Word, then whatever human reason truly recognises in the order of the world about us is a true revelation from God. We must not, indeed, too severely blame the timidity of those believers who resist as long as they can a new light of science because it seems at variance with revealed dogma. It is not only natural, but right, that men should refuse to accept new and momentous theories until they have been well tested, and that the apparent sense of Scripture should not be discarded as if it were of no importance. But all that a true believer will require is that the theories of science should be scientifically made good; and when once this is done, he will accept them with gratitude. He knows that Truth cannot be divided against Itself, that is, Christ against Christ (S. John xiv. 6). The new light may alter his interpretation of a text of Scripture, or of a book of it; it may require a readjustment of his conception of Inspiration as a whole; it may modify his view of some important doctrine. But he will be certain that nothing can be lost by progress in true knowledge, and that the view so modified of Christ, of the world, of the Bible, of Providence, of man, will result in a richer and more living doctrine, and lead to a more profound adoration of a God whose won-

drous works declare His Name to be nearer than we thought.

§ 8.

This is not the place in which to attempt an exhaustive reconciliation between the first chapter of Genesis and the discoveries of modern science. The design of the first chapter of Genesis (it has often been pointed out) is not to teach us scientific facts, but the way in which scientific facts are religiously to be regarded. A series of visions passes before the recipient of the revelation, like the visions of Isaiah and Ezekiel, for him to interpret as he may. Selected facts in the history of nature are depicted to him, so grouped and in such an order as to convey to a spiritual intelligence all that is necessary to be known of the history of the relation of the world to its Creator. That any part of the account in Genesis is scientifically inexact does not appear to be proven; but even if it were, the object of an artist is not always to copy line for line what he sees before him. It produces the required effect more livingly, nature is more truthfully portrayed, by following a different method. So it may be with the first chapter of Genesis. The main thing is to produce a true effect by bringing out certain great truths.

It is there seen, in the first instance, that matter is not eternal, but that it had an historical beginning, and that the sole cause of its beginning was the will of God. Next, we are made to observe that things were not in the beginning such as we see them now.

They have only attained to their present condition through a series of acts of Divine power. At first there is but a seething chaos of forces and atoms, "without form and void." This chaos comes step by step to be an organic and harmonious world; but the transformation is not due to accidental causes, nor to some natural property inherent in the material particles themselves apart from God. It is traced to the action of the Creator Spirit. Even if we were to translate, "And a wind of God,"—instead of "the Spirit of God,"—"was hovering upon the face of the waters," yet that phrase would not be explained by saying that it was an Orientalism for a "mighty wind." It would testify that our God was not the God of the Deist, making the world and leaving it to itself; and the Christian would still see, under the figurative description of the rushing mighty wind, the action of the Divine Spirit imparting life and order and beauty. And each new movement of the creation upwards to a more perfect system and a richer differentiation is (in the same way) ascribed to a voice of God, a free utterance of the Divine Word. The "days" which mark the stages of development are probably to be taken in their literal sense, not, indeed, as indicating the length of time which the development historically took, but as the symbolical framing of the successive visions to the Seer's eye. Three times over, and only three times, a truly *creative* act is discerned; first, in the production of the primeval atoms out of which the universe is constructed; second, in the introduction of

sentient animal life, all else, apparently, even to the growth of organic vegetable life, being treated as only an arrangement of what already exists; and lastly, in the movement by which man is created in the image of God (Gen. i. 1, 21, 27). Thus, while Moses does not enter upon a detailed and scientific account, he at least prepares the believer to hear of an evolution in some form; and to hear that that evolution all tends, with a Divine unity of purpose, to the genesis of man. All the efforts of nature are bent upon producing a man. When man at last stands upon the earth, the natural development is finished. Then comes the "seventh day," expressive of rest in an accomplished work, ushering in a new and higher kind of progress.

§ 9.

The infinite development of which man is capable makes him the lord and heir of all things, under God. His intelligence enables him even now to rule himself, and to control the animal and the material world. "The earth hath God given to the children of men" (Ps. cxv. 16). Man is to subdue it (Gen. i. 28); and, sometimes by slow steps and sometimes (as of late years) by great strides, science advances towards the fulfilment of the task, although an immensity yet remains to be fulfilled. It is man's kingdom, to be brought under a reign of holy law. But his powers are as yet only in their nonage, nor can he yet work the wonders upon creation which he is destined to work when the great regeneration takes place. The

very angels who now govern the universe are only temporary regents on his behalf — "tutors and stewards" (Gal. iv. 2),—to apply to them what S. Paul himself applies somewhat differently — under whom he and his possessions are, by the Father's will, until the appointed day. They have not man's interminable spring of progress in themselves; and therefore, mighty as they are, it is not to them that God has "subjected the world to come," but to that being whom, even now in his weakness, God deigns to visit so graciously and so richly (Heb. ii. 5, 6). To the great Head of humanity all principalities and powers are already subject, and hereafter they will be so to all the true members. We shall judge angels (1 Cor. vi. 2, 3), as well as the world, not in the sense of acquitting or condemning merely, but in the larger sense of governing and presiding over them.

Chapter IV.

Man and his Fall.

Man, the created Image of God—His Body and its earthly Origin—His Spirit—His Soul—Liability to Temptation—The Knowledge of Good and Evil—The Devil, and the Fall of Man—Unity of the Human Race—Traducianism and Creatianism—Hereditary Sin—Enslavement of the Will—Mankind still capable of Restoration.

§ 1.

Looking upon man as we now see him, we are conscious of looking upon a wreck, but a wreck which still retains enough of the original constitution to enable us to conjecture what he is intended for. Man is intended to be, in the world, what the Eternal Son is above the world. He is the created image of God, as the Word is the uncreated. Other creatures reflect fragments of the mind of God, but in man God is reflected whole. A rock, a tree, an animal, have no meaning by themselves; they only gain a meaning through their connexion with other things, and especially with man. But man, though essentially bound up with the world, has a meaning by himself. He is a complete world in himself. We cannot say what special faculties or special grouping of faculties in man constitutes the image of God in him; for man,

with all his complexity, is a single and undivided whole. There is something in him corresponding to everything that is in God. The uncreated Image of God contains explicitly, in one comprehensive consciousness, every motion of the Divine life; the created image contains the same implicitly, in a consciousness destined to expand for ever, drawing for ever nearer to the Divine fulness, while for ever finding an unexhausted ocean beyond him (Eph. iii. 19, reading πληρώθητε).

§ 2.

Man is at once a summing up of that which was before him, and a point of new departure. The saying, "Let Us make man in Our image" (Gen. i. 26), is in no way opposed to the modern theory of our development (so far as the animal nature is concerned) out of lower forms of life. Indeed, it would be perfectly grammatical to translate, "Let Us make man *into* Our image"—at once suggesting that a higher potency was conferred on an already existing thing. This, however, is unnecessary. Man became man, whatever he may have been before, by being made in the image of God. That gift constituted his humanity. Out of what material he was thus made is not mentioned in the verse which we have quoted. In another verse, which by some is supposed to contain a different tradition, and has hastily been judged incompatible with the first, we read, "The Lord God formed man, of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life" (Gen. ii. 7).

Without disloyalty to these words, we may, in the light of modern discoveries, believe that the dust was already animated dust before the breathing spoken of, and ages may have elapsed between the "forming" and the "breathing." For the object of the sacred writer is to teach the lowly origin of man's physical constitution—that on one side he is composed of mere material particles, "of the earth, earthy;" and this is equally shown, whether we believe the first man's body to have been fresh formed out of its chemical elements, or produced out of earlier living organisms. But we may see a special fitness in the latter thought if man is indeed to be the meeting-point of heaven and earth. Each human being now, they tell us, in the rudimentary stages of his growth, passes through phases similar to those of the lower animals. In a sense, each of us gathers up and re-capitulates in his own body the forms of life below him. And that which thus takes place in the specimen may well be true of the genus. We welcome the continuity of physical life which binds us to all that went before us and to all that on earth surrounds us. The body which is the result of that long evolution is one of which we have no need to be ashamed. It is itself a noble thing. It is not yet all that it will be, but even now it has something of the glory of the Image of God, being the true expression in flesh of that which man at present really is.

§ 3.

Upon the bodily side man stands among the animals as the noblest of them; but he has another side by which he holds communion with God and invisible things. He has a spirit as well as a body—a spirit not like that "spirit of the beast which goeth downward to the earth," having but an attraction to the things of sense, and that an unreflecting attraction; "the spirit of the sons of man" is one "which is ascending" (Eccles. iii. 21). The spirit is in us the element of self-consciousness and freedom. By it we see our true relation to the things of sense, and are able to claim affinities above them. It is a gift from God (Eccles. xii. 7), and unless it be unfairly tampered with, it must by its very constitution "ascend," and aspire after God and what is Godlike. In it is the seat of the higher, the only true, free, will, as opposed to the random animal impulses of the flesh. There lies the power of conscience, by which we are able to judge our own actions, comparing them with what we see to be the right standard, and condemning ourselves when we have allowed the true will to be mastered by the inferior appetite. Such a spirit is not and cannot be (so far as we can understand) a product of natural evolution, but comes direct from the hand of God.

§ 4.

Man is thus a dual being, living at once in two worlds, not two separate lives, but one life in the two.

The spirit lives in the body, and acts through it and makes it its vehicle. The meeting-point of spirit and body appears to lie in the soul. "The Lord God formed man out of the dust of the ground"—there is his body—"and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life"—there is his spirit—"and man became a living soul." Particular expressions like "living soul" and "breath of life" might be used of other beings than man; but the unique act of the Divine inbreathing gives in this instance a different value to the words. The same tripartite division of man's being is distinctly brought out by S. Paul. "May the very God of peace sanctify you entire, and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved unimpaired unblameably, in the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thess. v. 23). Once more, the difference between soul and spirit is sharply marked in the Epistle to the Hebrews. "The word of God is alive and energetic, piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow" (Heb. iv. 12). And a whole array of thoughts gather about the adjectives derived from the two words respectively. "Spiritual" things (πνευματικά), stand in the sharpest contrast with "soul" things (ψυχικά), which latter are represented in our versions by the word "natural" (1 Cor. ii. 14; xv. 44), and even "sensual" (S. James iii. 15; S. Jude 19), while the margin of the Revised Version suggests the ambiguous rendering "animal." Holy Scripture, therefore, although frequently using the word "soul" in a popular sense, either for the whole immaterial part of man, or for the man himself

in the fulness of his individuality, seems, when it speaks with psychological precision, to join the soul more closely with the body than with the spirit. Though capable of exaltation, the soul more naturally gravitates downwards. In this animal, or sensual, or natural, region lies the great struggle of life. The soul is torn by the conflict between flesh and spirit, with both of which it is so vitally one. It is their debateable ground, and the winning of it is the winning of the man himself. His very life is at stake. The one great business is the "acquisition of the soul" (Heb. x. 39). The "loss of the soul" (S. Mark viii. 36) is the irreparable loss. That loss is (so far as this life is concerned) consistent with very great and valuable acquisitions. The man may not merely have enjoyed sensual pleasures, and the possession of wealth and influence and power, but he may have attained to great intellectual culture, a high degree of learning and scientific knowledge and artistic skill. Yet these things belong, after all, to the lower faculties—the faculties of the "natural," or "sensual," or "animal," man; and unless they have been put at the disposal of the spiritual faculties, to be brought to the service of God, the soul is lost.

§ 5.

It is this duality which lays man open to temptation. Though the Creator, looking down upon His newly formed image in Eden, pronounces him—or rather, the world and man in it—"very good," the goodness was not a final and completed goodness.

The "original righteousness" in which we were made was the goodness of a perfectly fair and noble beginning. It was the goodness of holy infancy as compared with that of the fully developed saint. It consisted in a perfectly well-ordered constitution, which only needed to be normally exercised that it might reach a true moral as well as natural perfection. But in order that the promise of that first fair start might be realised, it was necessary, so far as we can see, that it should be brought to the test. Good dispositions do not ripen into virtues except by seeing and rejecting their opposites. Though made "in the image of God," it is significantly said that man was made "*after* His likeness." He was not as yet actually like in character to God, but had the power and tendency to rise into that likeness and to make it voluntarily his own by the proper and harmonious use of his varied faculties. Man had himself to train; and he had, besides, a duty towards the world, over which he was to rule, as God's representative. To rule over the world in any full sense, he needed a sympathetic appreciation of all that it contained; and to have a sympathetic appreciation of all that the world contained at once involved a possible seduction. One of the great paradoxes of life is this —that the true value of the flesh and fleshly things is only known to those who, by cultivation of their spiritual nature, are able to maintain their independence of the flesh and their attitude of sovereignty towards it; while, on the other hand, that is no true spiritual sovereignty or independence which looks

upon the flesh and fleshly things with indifference, or with abhorrence, or with contempt, or with dread.

If, therefore, man was to bear the character for which he was destined, and if he was to perform the office for which he was placed in the world, he could not but be tempted to fling himself with too much ardour into the good things of the realm that was put under him, and to make it his own instead of making it God's. But the very attempt to make it his own, irrespective of God, tears it away from himself and God alike. The true link between God and the world is severed, and, instead of "subduing" the world, man is himself "subdued" by it. No longer standing above it, in the stability of the "free spirit," he becomes engrossed in it, a mere part of it, without true freedom of will, which can only be obtained from communion with God. By selfish grasping at the mastery of things, he makes himself the sport of his surroundings; and these surroundings have themselves become disordered by man's desertion of his post, and tend to become more and more disordered, and to exhibit an ever-sharper antagonism towards the Creator's will. Man himself falls into bondage, and "the creature itself also," according to S. Paul, though "not willingly," shares his bondage, and groans for deliverance through and with him (Rom. viii. 19, foll.).

§ 6.

The whole account of the Fall of man, in Genesis, is full of difficulties. It contains, doubtless, a record

of true historic facts, though the facts are presented to us under an allegorical shape. Under any other shape we could not have received or understood them.

Our first parents, in a state of innocence, are set before us as dwelling in a "Garden of Delight," having all that was necessary for their happy development. Two mystic Trees stand in the garden, of which the first, the Tree of Life, no doubt represents the life of union with God. Of this they were permitted to eat, as of the other trees of the garden. The second, the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, was submitted to their contemplation, and the Creator Himself forces their attention to it, in the form of a commandment not to eat of it, combined with a warning of the consequences of so doing. By this tree, and the prohibition attached to it, we are to understand that God wished man to know evil indeed, but to know it as He Himself knows it—as a thing possible, but hateful. The thought of evil must, it is admitted, eternally be present to the mind of God, but present as the contrary of all that God is or can be; and if man was to rise into the likeness of his Creator, he too must know evil, but as a thing external to himself and for ever to be detested. To eat of that Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil—that is, probably, of the difference between good and evil, or, possibly, of the mixture of evil with good—is to become acquainted with the difference, not by contemplation, but by experience, to know what evil is by choosing to do, and suffer, and be, evil.

It may at first surprise us that the fatal tree did

not appear outwardly repulsive, and thereby of itself guard man against a fall. But such a thought ignores the very nature of temptation. Temptation does not and cannot come to man in a bare notional form. Evil, as evil, can gain no access to him unless it be after a long course of desperate wickedness. It is only as the abuse of that which is positively good and desirable that it possesses any attractions for him; and so long as man is conscious of having a personality of his own, and of being surrounded by a world of good things, so long the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil cannot help looking to him "good for food, and pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise."

§ 7.

But although man, from his constitution, could not have failed to feel the temptation—and indeed his rise and progress without it cannot be imagined—yet we are allowed to understand that the enticements of the world were not sufficient by themselves to withdraw him from his allegiance to the Creator, without the interposition of a "seducing spirit," which made use of those enticements. The account of the Fall in Genesis sets before us another symbolic figure in the scene, namely, the Serpent. Much speculation has gathered round this figure, and various explanations of it have been proposed. But the common solution seems to be the simplest. Whatever we are to understand by the Devil, the same we may understand of this cunning and insinuating figure, which, perhaps

itself in the allegoric picture feeding on the forbidden fruit, suggests the doubt of God's motive in forbidding it. Certainly the Apocalypse appears to identify the two: "The great dragon was cast out, the ancient serpent, he that is called the Devil, and Satan, he that leadeth astray the entire inhabited earth" (Rev. xii. 9). It will be necessary, before proceeding, to dwell for a while upon this unhappy being and his history. In so doing we are brought face to face with the problem of the origin of evil. It is simple enough to narrate, so to speak, the story of its beginning; but it is more difficult—perhaps impossible at present—fully to explain how, in the eternal nature of things, circumstances could arise which admit of such a beginning of moral evil.

That evil, as the opposite of good, must always have occupied a place in the thoughts of God, we have already seen. But God can neither think, nor do, nor create, nor be in any way drawn towards evil, so as to call it into any positive existence, or give it any historical development. It remains for Him always a hateful conception, but nothing more. Although the utmost excesses of what might be done in the way of evil lie bare to His consciousness, God does not dwell upon it, for He is "of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on iniquity" (Hab. i. 13). The very idea of it is revolting to Him. All His works, as He first made them, were free from the least admixture of it, and from the least tendency towards it. It is not (as the Manichæans taught) inherent in matter. It is not involved in the creation

of limited wills. Its existence, as an actual fact, is not necessary to the development of human or angelic excellence. It never ought to have been, and God never designed that it should be. And, in a certain sense, moral evil does not exist now. It is not a thing. It only exists so far as it is adopted and embodied in evil wills; and if those evil wills were all purged of it, evil would again have no existence. But in order that wills may be truly good and not evil, they must have seen evil, and seen it without sympathy, with no desire to know it by experience, and must have freely chosen to know only God. We can form no idea of a holy will, without evil being presented to it as a possible alternative. Therefore the very creation of beings intended to be holy appears to involve the risk of their choosing wrong.

It would seem that this necessary test had been applied to older spirits than man's. Amongst those angelic beings whom God appointed to be His mediators and agents with the lower creation, some made the right choice, and some the wrong. It would be rash and vain to profess to understand in what form the temptation could present itself to pure immaterial spirits; but some light is, perhaps, thrown upon the question by S. Paul's warning to S. Timothy not to appoint a new convert to high spiritual office, "lest, being puffed up with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the Devil" (1 Tim. iii. 6). Though the meaning of these last words is doubtful, it has reasonably been supposed, from S. Paul's language, that the being whom we now know as the Devil fell

in some way through pride—an undue elation at the position he occupied, and at the wealth of powers which he found within himself. Our Lord's more general, yet more explicit, statement is that "he stood not firm in the truth" (S. John viii. 44, οὐκ ἔστηκεν). All forms of sin, according to the teaching of S. John, are departures from "the truth;" and it is clear, from our Lord's words, that the Evil One was once "in the truth," but did not maintain his position. The same is taught concerning other condemned spirits:—"Angels which kept not their own beginning"—or, as some would translate, "their own principality"—"but deserted the dwelling-place which belonged to them" (S. Jude 6).

At what point of time this fall of angels took place, or whether all fallen angels fell together, is uncertain. There is much ground for thinking that S. Jude identified the fall of the angels, of which he speaks, with the fall of the "sons of God" which preceded the Flood (Gen. vi. 2, 4). Not being linked together by that solidarity of species which unites mankind, the fall of one did not necessarily involve the fall of others, and each fell for himself alone. But the first, as well as the greatest, to fall was Satan, if we rightly understand our Lord to say that Satan is not only himself a liar, but "the father of it" (S. John viii. 44). That is to say, all evil, as an active and existing fact, is to be traced to him. It was he who first gave historical birth to evil, by himself choosing to try it. When and how this was, we are not told; we only know that "from the beginning he was a murderer,"

—not, that is, from the outset of his own existence, but from the beginning of history as known to us, from our first experience of his dealings with us, from the day when he induced man to revolt from God, and so "murdered" him.

It is quite possible to think that Satan did not attain his utmost depth of wickedness at the first bound. The ancient theologians are agreed that he is without foreknowledge, although his vast experience has doubtless given him extraordinary power of forecasting. If he had known, or believed—as he might have known, and ought to have believed—what it would come to, he would never have taken the first step in his mad and wicked adventure. Having once invented evil as an active principle, and gaining perpetually wider knowledge of its power, he was determined to play it out to the end, and relied upon its force to rival goodness and love. "Lo, this is he that took not God for his strength, but trusted in the abundance of his own resources, and strengthened himself upon his wickedness" (Ps. lii. 7). This it is which makes the case of Satan a case of unique hopelessness. Had his attempt been purely a speculative one, or had it been a mere prank like that of a mischievous child, had he taken care to try the power of evil upon himself alone, had he been frightened when he saw how fearful a force he had set at work, or believed the proofs which were given him that love and goodness were still more powerful, and acknowledged, and desisted, then we can imagine that his punishment might have been lessened or re-

mitted. But, knowing the evil of evil, he chose it just because it was evil, and espoused its cause, and explored it to its depths, and drew it all into his life, until evil as a whole became as entirely identified with Satan, as good is with God. He is "the Evil One."

The seduction of man was one stage in his downward career. Himself having tasted evil, he persuaded mankind to do the same, not in the open and direct manner in which himself had done so, but craftily and subtilly, as the serpent-form expresses. He displays and calls attention to the charms of the lower world, as they appeal to the senses, the imagination, and the intellect. What would have tempted silently and almost unheeded without him, becomes through him articulate, aggressive, insistent. The special point of assault is as craftily selected as the special engine. It is not the man himself who is first assailed—the authoritative rational head; but the woman, representing the more impulsive and passive element in our nature. Not seeing, though she ought to have seen, what she was about, she yielded to the desire which ought to have been felt and checked; and then, in her turn, became temptress. The man, who would have resisted the attractions of sense, and detected the falsehood of the spiritual whisper, was unwilling to withstand the temptation when he had to choose which he would part company with, his God or his fallen wife, and went open-eyed into the snare. "Adam was not beguiled, but the woman being beguiled hath fallen into transgression" (1 Tim. ii. 14).

The words, "Because thou hast done this thing," in the sentence on the serpent, show that Satan's last day of grace was thus ended. Each actor in the scene receives the natural and condign reward of his action. Each must accept the situation in which he has placed himself. The man is to continue his task of subduing the earth, under the new difficulties with which he has surrounded himself; the woman still to crave, and to suffer through her craving; the evil spirit to remain what for the nonce he had chosen to be—expressed by the serpent-figure, with no power to erect himself any more, unable to rise even into such freedom and happiness as are enjoyed by the brute creation, to find no support for his existence except in "dust." And so to this day it is with the Evil One, and will be so long as he continues to exist. Unable any longer to receive the "food of angels," and having no more power of self-sustenance than any other creature, he is driven, with all the other spirits which have taken his side, to find a life for himself in picking up what he can in the world of living beings —in that lower element out of which man is made— by actual possessions of man or beast when circumstances allow of it; or by triumphs of sin, petty as well as great; or at least by making himself felt through cruel and harassing temptations. These are his only outlet into real existence.

§ 8.

The position which Adam occupies with regard to the human race makes his fall a matter of more

than personal consequence to himself. Mankind is so bound up together that, even now, what befalls any member of the species affects the fortunes of the whole. "No one of us liveth unto himself, and no one dieth unto himself" (Rom. xiv. 27). But Adam was not a mere individual member of the species, like one of ourselves. He was the whole of young humanity. It was all gathered in his one person.

It is not needful here to go into the inquiry whether, as a matter of history, the human race emanated from a single pair of progenitors or not. It may suffice to say that, although the fact has been discussed with freedom, no scientific proof has been given to the contrary. The unity of the race would not, indeed, be overthrown by the discovery that several strands of diverse origin had been blent together. If ever such proof is forthcoming, the Church will be guided by the Holy Spirit to see the true bearings of the newly acquired fact. Mankind would still have many points of union. But till then we may, with equal fidelity to science and to Scripture, believe that the acknowledged unity now existing is based upon a unity of origination. Logically, it seems easier to account for the divergence of what was at first one, than for the union of what was at first heterogeneous. And the New Testament, as well as the Old, seems to lay emphatic stress on the oneness of our source. "God," says S. Paul to the *élite* of a nation who prided themselves on the tradition that their ancestors had sprung out of the soil of Attica, and who looked upon the Jew as something

not to be classified in the same category of being with themselves—"God made out of one"—not merely "of one blood," but "by derivation from a single ancestor"—"every nation of men for to dwell upon all the face of the earth" (Acts xvii. 26).

So earnestly, indeed, do the sacred writers insist upon this, that they will not allow us to trace our descent to Adam and Eve, and there to stop. Eve herself must be traced to Adam. Woman, according to Holy Scripture, owes her origin to a definitely creative act on the part of God, like man himself; but her creation is not independent of his. It is the man who is created "the image and glory of God; but the woman is the glory of the man" (1 Cor. xi. 7). The man contains within himself all that is, in the moral sense, characteristic of the woman also; but for his enriching and perfecting, for the emphatic bringing out and development of his "glory"—that is, of what was best in him—woman is taken out from him and given existence in a separate form. While revealed religion strenuously asserts the spiritual equality of women with men,—as it teaches the equality of barbarian with Greek, or of bond with free, the accidental circumstances of the soul's position making no difference to the soul's intrinsic dignity;—yet it asserts with equal clearness that womanhood occupies a subordinate position to manhood in the economy of the race. It has been held that while manhood represents the creative element, the point of new departure, womanhood represents rather the traditional element, the abiding groundwork

of human nature. If there be any truth in this, it shows far-reaching significance in S. Paul's saying, "Adam was first formed, then Eve" (1 Tim. ii. 13). Though himself formed from the dust, man did not mingle with the dust again. His bride owed her origin to nothing less than himself—himself in his newly given dignity. "The mother of all living" (Gen. iii. 20), took shape from him, her fountain-head. Close and recent as was Adam's cousinship to the lower forms that surrounded him, they gave him no solace or sympathy; but in Eve he recognises at once all that is most loveable in himself set forth before him in a form that he could love with self-sacrifice and without selfishness. "This, at last, is bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh" (Gen. ii. 23, 24). Thus what seemed to threaten a division in human nature, conduces to a richer unity.

§ 9.

The children born of this union inherit the one common nature, but that nature infinitely diversified. In past years it was a much-debated question whether the soul of the child is derived from its parents, or whether it is a direct creation of God. The former opinion is known as Traducianism, the latter as Creatianism. The truth appears to lie in the union of the two beliefs.

Each human personality is the direct creation of the Almighty, who has been pleased to call such a being into existence, and to give it its special and individual characteristics. But these characteristics as well as the common nature that is modified by them, come in no sudden or violent manner. They are the result—we may say, the inevitable result —of the forces at work in the generations before. Human nature is a rich material to work upon; and the diversities that may be brought out in it through various combinations are endless. God's creative power is as much seen in effecting these combinations, so as to produce the diversities, as in the original act by which He breathed into the nostrils of the thing which he had formed of the dust. Our religion is entirely opposed to the Deistic notion that God at the beginning started the species on its course, and then stood aside and allowed it to develope by mechanical laws or by its own caprice. His providence is incessantly at work even in the smallest details of history, not by a number of arbitrary fiats, but by continuous and orderly processes of gentle manipulation. As we have shown the immanence of the Divine Word in nature to be the principle which carries nature along without confusions or interruptions, so it is with the life of mankind. Each human being is the vehicle of a special manifestation of the Word, and each has been the object of the special forethought of God. It is not only of great prophets, but of every person on earth, though with a different shade of meaning, that the

saying to Jeremiah holds true: "Before I formed thee in the womb, I knew thee" (Jer. i. 5).

§ 10.

This tempering of the Creatianist with the Traducian belief helps us to understand the Church's doctrine of original sin. Upon the Creatianist theory alone, the universality of sin would be inexplicable. If the soul comes entirely fresh from the hands of the Creator, without dependence upon its earthly parentage, how comes it to exhibit evil tendencies from earliest infancy? Is it possible for God to create—in the sense of an entirely fresh origination—a thing which is morally faulty? Or, on the Pelagian assumption that the new-born infant is not morally faulty, how comes it that no single human being, except Christ, has been able to withstand temptation? On the Creatianist theory pure and simple, every child must come into life with as fair a field as the first man had, except for the prevalence of bad examples all around—for the differences which scholastic theology devised were based upon an unwarranted conception of what Adam's state was—and every child must submit to the test for himself, as if it were the first time that any one had been tested. Surely if this had been the case, and human beings had such independence of each other, the "following of Adam" would not have prevailed so universally. Here and there at least we should have expected to see an unfallen specimen of humanity. Out of a million million of Adams we could not think that all would go wrong.

But in point of fact that theory ignores the unity of the human race. It makes our relation to each other a merely external and fantastic one. If human parentage does nothing more than provide physical organisms into which beings from some other region are introduced, mankind is only a nominal thing; it is but a temporary classification of spirits accidentally thrown together and united only by transitory interests. The love of parents to children, and of children to their parents, rises up against so unnatural a doctrine. We are bound to think that the inward as well as the outward life of men is one, and is transmitted from generation to generation. And this being so, the father can transmit to his son only the life which is his own. He transmits humanity, not in its ideal, but in its actual condition, in the form in which he himself has it. This is significantly brought out in the book of Genesis, where, after saying that Adam was made in the image and after the likeness of God (i. 26), it tells us that Adam, now fallen, "begat *in* his own likeness, *after* his image" (v. 3). The similarity of character was already there; it was now the original constitution which was harder to be recovered.

So in practice we find it. The offspring favours the parent (with the natural differences), not only in feature, and form, and voice, and gait, and little tricks of manner—partly imitated, it may be, yet partly inherited—but also in intellectual parts, in tastes and inclinations, in moral bent. As the son's body inherits not, perhaps, his father's consumption

or gout, but the peculiar liability to it, so his soul lies specially open to the sins which were his father's and his grandfather's curse. When drunkenness, or violent temper, or covetousness, have had unrestrained sway in a family for two or three generations, the descendant stands in a much worse position for resisting those forms of temptation than another man might. The natural defences of his soul are broken down. In the language of old theologians, the *frenum cupiditatum*, the bridle of the desires, is no longer born in him. And that which we see visibly, in special instances, and with regard to particular forms of sin, we are taught to be equally true of sin in general throughout the race. Each soul has its own particular weakness, but all alike are weak. And not weak only, but depraved and distorted and wrong.

We must not, indeed, mistake. The Church never teaches that the guilt of Adam's sin is imputed to his progeny, as if in some way they were held responsible for it, and deserved punishment for it although themselves innocent of it. Such teaching would be a shocking travesty of the Catholic belief. If we are "by nature children of wrath" (Eph. ii. 3), it is to be referred to no such artificial and unrighteous arrangement, but to the fact of the solidarity of the human race. It is vain to speculate whether, if Eve had stood firm, or if Adam had repudiated his wife's action, the race would thereby have been established and secured from danger of subsequent falling, or whether the conflict would have been renewed over each individual with a hope of detaching one here

and one there from the noble species. But the converse is certainly true, that the fall of our "first father" (Isa. xliii. 27) was the fall of us all, and that "by the one man's disobedience the many were constituted sinners" (Rom. v. 19). From that time forth every human being but One has been conceived in sin, and has come into the world with a more or less vitiated and depraved nature, upon which, accordingly, God's holiness cannot but look with displeasure, however blent with pity. And that which was by birth our misfortune has become by choice our fault. The tendency which a discerning eye would have seen in us at our very conception has been verified; and, by embracing and approving the defect of our nature, we have become verily guilty.

§ 11.

The true harmony between Creatianism and Traducianism suggests the lines which must lead eventually to the harmony between necessity and free-will. Our personal freedom is a fact within our cognisance. We are conscious of making acts of choice all day long. We deliberate freely, and take the advice of friends, and feel that we are actually responsible for what we have done or left undone. No sophistication really persuades the conscience to acquiesce in wrong-doing as inevitable; or, at least, if a man can persuade himself that it is so in his own case, he does not when the wrong-doer is his neighbour and himself the sufferer. We *know* that we are free.

Yet the stoutest champion of free-will cannot

assert that the free-will is unconditioned. It is exerted within limitations, and accurate thought tends to make the limitations more and more close. My freedom is not an absolute freedom, but the freedom proper to me. It is the freedom of a man; not the freedom of God on the one hand, nor the freedom of an animal on the other. I cannot choose to create a world, nor can I choose to fly. I am only able to choose what lies within the powers of humanity. Nor, indeed, is my freedom as wide as the limits of humanity. It is modified by my being an Englishman, of the nineteenth century, a middle-aged man, born in a certain station of life, the son of certain parents, educated after a particular fashion, surrounded by my own surroundings, influenced by my own past acts of choice. Both within and without there are forces which give a special direction to my will.

Some of the very conditions which in a certain sense restrict a man, in another sense heighten and elate his sense of freedom. Praise him for acting like a man and an Englishman; tell him that he is a man of the day, his father's true son; and he will feel pleased and flattered, and endeavour to act in the same way again. He reckons himself free from all thwarting influences when he acts according to the law of his true self. But there is one thing which has come in to qualify his freedom, which ought never to have been there. He does not choose with the liberty, however restricted, of a perfect man. It is but the liberty of a maimed and paralysed nature.

He naturally wills with a bias towards evil—at least in some directions. To act according to the perfection of nature would be the true freedom. And this man has lost. He recognises that he is not his true self. It is only with difficulty that he works towards it again. By the fall of Adam, the will, which before was conditioned but free, is now not only conditioned but enslaved. Nothing but the action of grace can free it. To this subject we must recur when we treat of the doctrine of grace.

§ 12.

All the flood of beings, then, to whom Adam has transmitted his nature are evil and sinful. The evil penetrates their moral fibre, their flesh and blood, their imagination and intelligence, their very conscience and spirit. And yet amidst all this woeful ruin there are signs of hope. Men are not in the condition of devils. Here and there, indeed, some men have attained, as has been terribly said, to "a disinterested love of evil." But they are few, and they were not born so. Human nature, though fallen, has not lost its true prerogative and characteristic. Although it no longer naturally developes into the Divine likeness, but the opposite, yet it still retains the Divine image, broken and obscured, but remaining. Even in doing evil, we are sorry for it, and feel it to be unworthy of us. While this remains there is something that can be laid hold of. Man, though lost, is still capable of being saved.

Chapter V.

The Incarnation of the Word of God.

Hope of Recovery for the Fallen Race—Preparation for the Incarnation—Teleology of History—Miraculous Conception of Christ—The Incarnate Word the same Person as before—Impersonality of His Human Nature—Union of the Two Natures not effected by Conversion of the Godhead into Flesh—nor by Confusion of the Two—nor by Absorption of the Human in the Divine—Perfectness of both Natures—the Human capable of receiving the Divine—the Divine accommodated to the Human by Voluntary Limitation.

§ 1.

The fragmentary good which the Fall has left in man is not sufficient to enable man to save himself. His spiritual faculties are not destroyed; but they are so sprained and weakened that they would be unable to assert their rightful mastery unless aided from without. And man's will is not only too much enfeebled to set itself persistently to recover those faculties, but (in varying degrees in different persons and races) it is positively bent in an opposite direction. It naturally seeks to make self its centre; and, though it would have no objection to God, if God would accommodate Himself to its convenience and keep the place we choose to assign to Him—yet, when it finds the

nature and extent of His claims, man's self-will resents them, and carries the resentment of them so far as actually to dislike Him who makes them. The statement of S. Paul proves accurately true, that "the carnal mind is enmity towards God, for it does not submit to God's law, and in fact it cannot" (Rom. viii. 7).

To enable it therefore once more to submit to God's law, and so attain the true creaturely freedom, which is salvation, man needs a Saviour. And, if so, there is but one direction to which he can hopefully turn. The inexorable foes who wrought his ruin will take no pity on him, or undo what they have done. No remedy for his plight can be found in a closer observance or better application of the laws of nature. No specimen member of the tainted race rises high enough above his fellows to restore them to their normal condition; nor can any association of men, on the natural basis, do more than partially restrain the outward activity of evil; it cannot cure the souls of its members. God alone is able to repair the mischief which man has inflicted on creation and himself. The great message of the Gospel is that God is not only able so to do, but willing also; and that He has, in fact, done it, in the Person of His Son Incarnate.

§ 2.

S. Paul's favourite expression about "the fulness of the times" teaches us that the providence of God had long been preparing for the Incarnation. There

was nothing abrupt and violent in the circumstances of its accomplishment. The whole course of things, however little understood by men, led directly up to it.

On the one side, a mysterious phrase in the Gospel of S. John teaches us that there was some Divine process by which the adorable Person who was to come was made ready for His mission. "Say ye of Him whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest, because I said, I am the Son of God?" (S. John x. 36). What constituted that consecration and equipment of the Eternal Son remains a secret into which we cannot look.

But the Word was also fashioning things on earth for His manifestation—first in those long processes, of which we have spoken, which led up to the formation of man, and then in human history. It might have been thought that the fall of man rendered him incapable of receiving the Incarnation; but it was not so. He was still possessed of reason and of conscience and of will, though not in full perfection; and the mercy which could educate those powers was not withdrawn from him. "The Life," which was observable in the constitution of things, and which came from the immanence of the Word, "was the Light of men; and the Light shineth in the darkness, and the darkness did not overtake it" (S. John. i. 4, 5). There was a moment, or there were moments, when it seemed as if the light would be wholly quenched. But it never came to pass. "The true Light" still "was, which enlighteneth every man, as it cometh

into the world." No single human being has been left altogether destitute of the illumination. In various degrees, and in a multitude of ways, the truth has pressed itself upon all men; and in whatever shape it has come to them, it was a manifestation of that one and the same Eternal Word, and a prophecy of His drawing nearer still.

The heathen—that is, the mass of mankind—had their appropriate discipline. They were left to themselves. "In the generations gone by," said S. Paul to the Lycaonian pagans, "God suffered all the nations to walk in their own ways," although He bore such testimony to Himself as they might gather from the bounties of nature (Acts xiv. 16). They knew enough of God to distinguish Him from His works, and to worship Him with thankfulness, if they would (Rom. i. 21, 25). Right and wrong were familiar notions to them, and the inward verdict of conscience made them feel at ease or not at ease according to their moral conduct, as if by a living code of law (Rom. ii. 14, 15). Their self-invented ritual, and even to a certain extent their mythology, formed a kind of elementary training, preparing them for something better (Gal. iv. 8, 9). Lawgivers and philosophers took them in hand. Here and there a choice and gifted soul among them received something which S. Paul recognises as a form of inspiration, and became "a prophet of their own" (Titus i. 12). Thus left to their own devices, they found and showed what men could do and what men could not do. Their successes and their hopeless failures

alike witnessed to the possibility and the need of a redemption.

Meanwhile the way for that redemption was more markedly preparing in the history of the Israelite race. That race was naturally well qualified for its high purpose. It had what has been called a genius for religion. Upon them, therefore, the Divine choice fell; and from Abraham onwards they were by unmistakeable signs and wonders singled out and set apart from all other nations to be the medium of God's self-revelation to the world. While mankind in general was left to find its own way, Israel felt himself to be the people of the Lord, and bound to Him in the strictest bonds of duty. But this special nearness to God did not put the Chosen People in any position of moral superiority over others. It did not exclude from them the liability to sin, or even give them much help to overcoming it. Indeed, the object of the Law which was given them was nothing else but this—to bring vividly home to them a sense of their sinfulness and infirmity. They were to learn by it that, beneath their legal observance, their covenanted privilege, their correct belief, the Jew was no better than the Gentile. This was the price which they had to pay for their prerogative. "You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore I will visit upon you all your iniquities" (Amos iii. 2). They were made to know, on behalf of all mankind, the guilt and shame of sin. An elaborate system of sacrifice inculcated the feeling. Whether that system was complete from the outset,

or, according to the risky theories of a modern school of critics, received its full development at a later date, makes no difference to the deep and prophetic suggestiveness of its symbolism. And the spiritually minded Hebrew felt, as he used it, that it disappointed him. It spoke of a release and a restoration which it never accomplished. The worshippers felt it to be an unsubstantial shadow in itself, and yearned for something which should in reality "fulfil" what this Divinely instituted ceremonial taught them to think of, but could not supply.

And what the Levitical worship taught through visible signs, the prophets taught in mysterious words Prophecy was the special glory of the Israelite people. Unlike the heathen nations, who looked back wistfully to a dim golden age in the past, the whole mind and soul of Abraham's descendants were anchored to the future. Faith—"the assurance of things hoped for, the proof of things not seen" (Heb. xi. 1)—was their very life. The nation was forward-bound. Their day was coming. It had been promised to Abraham, and, though it might tarry, it would come. Every partial deliverance, every partial deliverer, became to them—like their religious system itself—a type of the perfect that was to come. Vague and indefinite at first, their conception became richer and clearer with succeeding centuries. Each promising young king, or venerable priest, or woe-stricken prophet, added some detail to the ideal that was gradually forming, and for which at last a name was found. A Messiah—anointed with the Spirit of God

beyond all others—would bring all that was looked for. Not that we have reason to suppose that any consistent and comprehensive set of beliefs had gathered about the name of the Christ. The prophets themselves had not been able fully to grasp their own thoughts. Here and there a touch, a glimpse, a flash, came to them; but they could not piece it all together. They only felt, with such longing as made Daniel swoon away, that what they uttered was true, and that in due time others who came after them would see and profit by it (1 S. Pet. i. 10–12).

§ 3.

The more outward preparation of mankind, through the fortunes of empires, belongs, perhaps, rather to history than to theology. We need not now stay to point out the influences of the Egyptian bondage, or the Babylonian captivity, upon the Hebrews; or the effect of Greek conquests and the spread of the Greek language, and of the universal dominion of Rome; or of the dispersion of the Jews. This side of the *Praeparatio Evangelica* has often been worked out; and undoubtedly it affords a most impressive testimony to the Christian faith. On the assumption that our Lord was what we believe Him to be, nothing can be more reasonable than to suppose that all these movements on the large scale had a distinct teleological aim, and that they had reference to Him. There was nothing accidental in the fitness of the world's condition when our Lord was born. Though the historical development was perfectly free

and spontaneous, there was a Providence which knew how to guide it. And yet, with all this perfect adaptation of circumstances, our Lord was no necessary or merely natural outcome of His time and place. As, in the beginning, the world was made ready for the reception of human life before human life appeared, and yet human life was an entirely new factor introduced from without, so, "when the fulness of the time came," and not before, "God sent forth His Son, born of a woman" (Gal. iv. 4.), and yet not by the action of simply natural laws.

§ 4.

The new point of departure in history is marked by the miraculous mode of Christ's birth. He was "conceived by the Holy Ghost" (St. Matt. i. 20). Though the whole office of motherhood was performed by Mary, from the initial consent onwards, there was nothing at all resembling human fatherhood. The act which brought the Godhead into flesh was a purely creative act, like those at the beginning of the world. It was due to the operation of that Divine Spirit, who is the Finger of God, moulding all things as He wills, and imparting life in all its forms.

This miraculous intervention is not entirely due to the presence of sin in humanity. If there had been no Fall, and the Word had still been pleased to become incarnate by a birth, that birth would fittingly have been of a virgin, because so only would it be clear that a new thing was taking place on earth, and One

coming into the world who was not simply man. And the absence of earthly fatherhood appears also to accord well with that impersonal universality of our Lord's human nature of which we shall have to speak. Supposing that the Nestorian notion of Christ's Person were the right one, and Christ had been, in the ordinary sense, "a man," associated with the Word, there would have been little need for the virgin birth,—to secure a sinless father as well as mother might have been enough; but for the true Incarnation no other entrance into the world is imaginable but that which was chosen.

No manner of sin entered into the movement of will which issued in Christ's holy nativity. That maiden life which gave our Lord birth was entirely holy. It was the flower which sprang out of all the preparatory discipline which mankind — which Israel—had undergone. It was the most beautiful thing which had been seen since the expulsion from Paradise. Yet our Lord's original stainlessness was not absolutely dependent upon the holiness of His sacred Mother, in such a way as to be a purely natural heirloom fron her as sin is from other parents. It was fitting, indeed, that the Mother of the Lord should be the highest specimen of humanity; she would not have been chosen for the honour had she been otherwise; but in no case could any taint from her have attached itself to the Divine Person of her Offspring. It seems, in fact, to be the delight of S. Matthew, in tracing the genealogy of Christ, to call attention to the unholy and profane channels through

which, after the flesh, He came. The incestuous Tamar and the harlot Rahab, Ruth the heatheness and "the wife of Urias," are the only ancestresses whom he mentions. The purity of the last stage in the transmission was not actually more necessary to our Lord's incorruption than that of earlier stages. The Holy Ghost could only take from the maternal substance such elements as were befitting to the Incarnate Son, and would purify them in taking. We have no need, therefore, to assume the immaculate conception of Mary herself.

The first objection to pressing that doctrine upon the Church is that it is nowhere taught in Holy Scripture, nor by any ancient Father,—although, as S. Bernard points out, the doctrine is not one which the Fathers could have passed by with unanimous silence, if the doctrine had been true. It arose at Lyons, in France, in the twelfth century; and the local festival which was begun in honour of it was greeted by S. Bernard as "a presumptuous novelty—mother of rashness, sister of superstition, daughter of frivolity." He complained that so respected a Church as that of Lyons should have "allowed itself to be disfigured by such juvenile levity," introducing what "is unknown to Church practice, unapproved by reason, uncommended by ancient tradition." The royal Virgin, he said, had so many genuine honours that she stood in no need of spurious ones. That she was sanctified in the womb, he held in common with most Catholic believers, and that she was preserved sinless

throughout her life; but this did not of necessity prove her exempt from original sin. If the acknowledged sanctity of her birth depended on the sanctity of the antecedent conception, it would be easy to go still further back, and argue for the immaculate conception of her parents, and of her grandparents, and of her great-grandparents. Her conception was confessedly in the natural order of things, through the marriage union of her parents, and, as such, could not be free from the sin which now penetrates the whole working of the natural order. Indeed, S. Bernard thought it a strange mode of honouring the Blessed Virgin to teach that she was herself immaculately conceived, inasmuch as the credit of it would belong to another, not to her. It robbed her of the unique distinction which she possessed, by extending to her mother also the dignity of motherhood achieved without any compensating loss. Mary was no longer the only woman who had conceived without sin. And what was still more contrary to the Christian conscience, this novel doctrine took away a prerogative which belonged to Christ alone. "The Lord Jesus alone," says the saint, "was conceived of the Holy Ghost, because He alone was holy before His conception. He alone excepted, it holds true of all the rest of the children of Adam, what one of them confessed with as much truth as humility concerning himself, 'Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin hath my mother conceived me.'"

So S. Bernard reasoned. However much the Catholic might be inclined, as S. Bernard says was at

first the case with him, to allow as a pious opinion what seemed to be suggested by love of our Lord's Mother, after-reflexion shews that the opinion is not pious, but detracts from the fulness of Christ's redemption. Not only does it make the Blessed Virgin herself exempt from original sin, and therefore exempt from the common need of salvation; but by so doing it insulates our Lord Himself from direct touch with the sinful world. If it were true, the regeneration of humanity would begin, not with Him, but with her; and, instead of springing sinless out of the sinful race which He came to save, He would derive His humanity from something not like the rest of us. The doctrine would make His human sanctity, in a way, dependent upon hers, and a consequence of it. Thus the dogma of the immaculate conception of Mary, by its over-refinement, would put Christ at a distance from us, and mutilate the blessed fulness of the truth that He is "the Son of Man," and that all we are His "brethren."

§ 5.

By the action of the Creator Spirit upon the sacred Virgin, He who existed from all eternity as God with the Father became also Man with men. The Incarnation is the union of the Godhead with human nature in the single Person of Christ. It is a totally different thing from what we know as the *mystical* union of men with God. The mystical union consists in a loving apprehension of God by man, in response to God's apprehension of him, which results in an iden-

tity of will between the two—or, to speak more strictly, in an identity of the things willed—*idem velle ac nolle.* This mystical union is, indeed, grounded upon the same fact as the Incarnation, namely, that man is made in the Divine image, and therefore can enter into close relationship with God. But for all that, the hypostatic (that is, the personal) union is not merely a higher degree of the mystical. However fully developed the mystical union may be, it does not, and cannot, break down the distinction of personality. It would be mere Pantheism to suppose it. The heart may have perfect sympathy with God, the understanding may come to know Him even as He knows us, the will may cease to have a movement but that which He inspires; and yet the human person remains separate from the Divine. God, in the mystical union, does not *become* the man, nor the man God. It does not set up a single centre of consciousness,—a single "I,"—which perceives itself to be identically the same in the two different spheres of its operation, in the Divine and in the human. The two personalities remain unalterably distinct, with free interchange between them. The perfect type of the mystical union, therefore, is rather to be found in the relation between the Father and the Son, than in the relation beween the two natures of Christ.

To think otherwise is the error which is known to the Church by the title of Nestorianism. Although Nestorius did not formally maintain that the historical Christ was a combination of two associated persons, one human and the other Divine, the expressions

which he used can bear no other meaning. Revolting from the orthodox title of *Theotokos* (roughly rendered "Mother of God") applied to the Blessed Virgin, he maintained that she gave birth to something which was human first, and afterwards was taken into "conjunction" with the Eternal Word. The Eternal Word appropriated that human being which sprang from Mary, and made him His organ and instrument of self-manifestation; the humanity became His "receptacle;" but it was never personally united with Himself. The man who suffered and was buried was so open to the Divine communication as to become like an embodiment of God to the world; he was filled with the Divine energy to an infinitely greater extent than any other man; his conjunction with God was so intense as to render him a fit object for worship, and even to make him "rank as God;" but still it was not the Word Himself who suffered and was buried. If such teaching were true, it is clear that there was never any real Incarnation. There was but an alliance, after all, between a man and God; there was no actual entrance of God Himself into human conditions. Thus God, under the system of Nestorius, remains still at as great a distance from man as ever.

As against this disheartening fiction, the Church clung and clings firmly to the plain and literal meaning of S. John's words, supported by the whole tenor of Scripture: "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us" (S. John i. 14). It is evident that S. John intends to set before us, not the birth of a remarkable

man, but a stupendous event in the life of the Eternal Word. S. John is, so to speak, following the history of that Word; and, after speaking of creation as an incident in it, and giving a summary of His previous dealings with the world, he proceeds to say that that same adorable Person who "was in the beginning with God," Himself "became flesh, and dwelt among us." He did not exhibit Himself through another: He became human Himself. There was no break in the continuity of His personal life. It was one and the same throughout. He who pre-existed "in the form of God" (Phil. ii. 6) took upon Himself another form, and passed through a fresh series of experiences, without any loss of His true identity. In the womb which He did "not abhor," in the cradle and the carpenter's shop, in the baptismal stream and the wilderness of temptation, in the miracles of power, in the still greater miracles of weakness, entreating with "strong crying and tears" in Gethsemane, pouring out His soul unto death upon the Cross, as He lay dead in the sepulchre, and preached to the spirits in prison, rising, and returning to heaven,—His own Person never sank into abeyance, nor became confused with some other, created, person who acted as His earthly embodiment. It was He—the Word—who did and suffered all these things. "He that descended is the same also that ascended up" (Eph. iv. 10)—"Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever" (Heb. xiii. 8).

§ 6.

In order to guard this inestimable truth, the Church has learned to speak of our Blessed Lord's human nature as impersonal. The expression is a difficult one, and seems at first to imply that His humanity was defective, and not the same as ours. It is, however, but a way of saying what is expressed in the *Quicumque vult:* "He is not two, but one Christ." To assert that our Lord's human nature had a personality of its own, independent of *Him*, as if it could conceivably have been dissociated from Him and stood alone, and lived out its own life like any other man, occupying some other relation to the Godhead from that which it did occupy, would be to nullify the Incarnation. The purpose of the Incarnation is not solely to exhibit or display the character or power of God to men. Perhaps such an object might have been effected through something like the "possession" of a man by the Word. But if a solid union between God and man is to be brought about, if the Son of God is Himself going to take human nature as His own, if in His own Person He is to be "the Second Man" from heaven (1 Cor. xv. 47), and begin a new departure for the human race, then it is imperatively necessary that we should conceive of the humanity which he assumed as "impersonal"—that is, as having no centre of consciousness or being apart from *Him*. It was *He* who became man, who was born and who died, not another person, however closely connected with Him.

This is all that we mean by the "impersonality" of Christ's human nature. We do not mean by it that His human nature was an unreality, a phantom, an automaton, made to go through the semblance of a human life, and worked by a Divine Person outside of it. The Church does not substitute a Docetic figment for a living agent. Better the honest Nestorian man than such a neuter thing. A personal human being would make a worthier medium of communication with the world. The phrase simply betokens the unity of our Lord's Person, not a defect in the nature which He assumed.

The human nature stands no further off from our Lord's Person than the Divine, though He is Divine first and human after. We count it no defect in our bodies that they have no personal subsistence apart from ourselves, and that, if separated from ourselves, they are nothing. They share in a true personal life because we, whose bodies they are, are persons. What happens to them happens to us. The analogy has from ancient times been applied to the mystery of the hypostatic union in Christ. "As the reasonable soul and flesh is one man, so God and man is one Christ." It would be easy to press the analogy too far; but it serves its purpose in reminding us that personality is a thing which lies very deep in the background, and reaches forth through various organs, and enters into more than one range of experiences. The relation of soul to body in us is not the *same* as the relation of the Godhead to the manhood in Christ; but it helps us to see how the human nature of Christ

possesses personality only by being *His*, and how He, in it, can live a full human life.

Indeed, although theologians avoid the word because it is liable to be mistaken, there is nothing untrue in describing our Lord as having, in the Incarnation, become "a man." So He is called, in Holy Scripture, both in passages where the word may be taken in an adjectival or predicative sense, as in 1 Tim. ii. 5, where we could render it "the human Christ Jesus," or "Christ Jesus who is Himself Man;" and also in several places which do not admit of such a treatment. Not only is He so called by enemies, or as yet uninstructed disciples, but He calls Himself so: "Ye seek to kill Me, a Man (ἄνθρωπον) that hath told you the truth" (S. John viii. 40). S. Paul calls Him so, singling Him out from other men; "the grace of the one Man (ἀνθρώπου), Jesus Christ" (Rom. v. 15). Using a still more significant word, S. Peter speaks of Him as "a Man (ἄνδρα) approved of God" (Acts ii. 22), and S. Paul as "a Man (ἀνδρί) whom God ordained" to judge the world by (Acts xvii. 31).

Such language sets vividly before us the personal fulness of that human life which was lived on earth and is still being lived in heaven; and all that we need is to remember that that "Man" is none other than the Everlasting Son Himself. Men saw a personal human being, and not merely an impersonal nature, when they saw Jesus; but it was because they saw the Word Himself in flesh. Within what met their gaze there were not two persons residing,

who could hold dialogue with each other. They beheld an absolute and indivisible unity; and it was the same Person who spoke, whether He said, "Before Abraham was, I am," or whether He said, "I thirst."

§ 7.

The manner of this personal union lies beyond our comprehension, and we are not at liberty to make it suit our intelligence by anything which alters the character of either nature. Of such false methods perhaps the most elementary would be that condemned in the *Quicumque vult*, by the words, "One, not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh, but by taking of the manhood into God." The Word, when He became Man, did not turn Himself into a man. He did not exchange one nature for another, or cease to be what He was before. We may not thus secure the unity and continuity of His Person at the expense of His Divine nature. Were such a thing possible, although it might prove the kindness and self-sacrificing pity of the Son of God, it would destroy all the hopes which the Catholic faith brings us. The "conversion of the Godhead into flesh" would but have added one more man to the number of men—a sinless one, perhaps, among sinners, but it would have effected no union of God and men. The human nature would not have been appropriated by God, nor the Divine nature communicated to men. If the Son abdicated His Deity to assume humanity, He did but lower Himself, without raising what He came to help.

But the very idea is inconceivable. The fantastic language of a myth or a fairy tale can speak of turning one thing into another, but thought refuses to follow the process. No continuity could be preserved through such a change as that which would turn Daphne into a bay tree. It would simply mean the cessation of the one existence, and the substitution of another altogether. And if we tried to imagine the cessation of the Son of God, and the substitution for Him of a human being bearing His name, we should find ourselves reduced to a direct absurdity. Such a theory has never found a champion.

§ 8.

A more specious appearance is presented by another false theory which the Athanasian symbol proceeds to reject. "One, not by confusion of substance," it says, "but by unity of person." There have been, and still are, large numbers of Christians who, more or less consciously, and with considerable differences among themselves, occupy this heretical position. It is known as Monophysitism. For many hundred years it has been the recognised creed of several ancient Churches. In its coarsest form it would teach that the two natures of which the Christ is composed, though originally distinct, have so run into each other as to be indistinguishable. They not only permeate and interpenetrate each other at every point: they are fused and blent into one. It does not suffice to say that Christ is one person; you must say that He has but one nature. You must

attribute both His glories and His limitations indiscriminately to the new whole developed by the Incarnation.

The Monophysite theory is an improvement upon that of the conversion into flesh, inasmuch as it recognises the action of both elements in Christ; but it, too, destroys the true conception of an Incarnation. The fusion of the two natures, had it been possible, would have produced a *tertium quid* which would be neither God nor man. Thus, no less than the theory last considered, it would involve a "turning" of one thing into another; only it would repeat the absurdity twice over. It would necessitate turning, not the Godhead only, but the manhood also, into something foreign—into some nameless nature, betwixt and between, the fabulous nature of a semi-human demigod.

§ 9.

The most frequent form of Monophysitism, however, is that which is known by the name of its exponent Eutyches. In our remarks upon it we do not confine ourselves to the language employed by Eutyches himself, but deal with the tendency which he represents. It differs from that which has just been described by virtually making nothing of our Lord's humanity. It may be called the opposite of the doctrine which turns the Godhead into flesh, for it practically turns the flesh into Godhead. According to this view, when the two natures become united in the Person of the Incarnate Lord, the limited creaturely nature must, to all intents and

purposes, disappear amidst the glories of the infinite nature to which it is joined. It becomes absorbed and lost. As a drop of vinegar is swallowed up in the sea, so the humanity of Christ is swallowed up in His Divinity. The illustration is an ancient one.

Such a doctrine practically reduces the historical life of Christ to an unreality. It offers little more than the earlier Docetism, which boldly maintained that the body of our Lord was a hallucination. Eutychianism would give it as much reality as would fulfil the false though splendid image of Shelley—

> "A mortal shape to Him
> Was as the vapour dim,
> Which the orient planet animates with light."

It would agree with that poet in making Him tread the thorns of death and shame "like a triumphal path," of which He never truly felt the sharpness. The development of His human nature, according to Eutychian views, could only take place in appearance and externally; there could be no expansion and progress which He could observe within Himself. If it could be said that His human soul was at any time ignorant of any fact, such ignorance was altogether imperceptible amidst the omniscience of His Godhead. To speak of Him as having been unable to do this or that would shock the Eutychian tendency of mind, as seeming to derogate from the truth of His Deity.

Thus it comes to pass that the sense of His being (in the language of Chalcedon) "consubstantial with us according to His manhood," and really like to us in all things but sin, becomes obscured. Divine

attributes are bestowed, not upon *Him*, but upon His sacred humanity. It is made, for instance, to be ubiquitous. Attention is concentrated upon it, as distinct from the Divine nature which is joined with it, and then Divine honours are paid to it. That the humanity of Christ is indeed a fitting object of adoration is recognised by all Catholics, but not His humanity by itself. The Eutychian tendency, which draws the mind's eye away from the Divine Person, to fix it upon the human nature, or even upon the material elements, which that Divine Person has assumed, and worships what it thus contemplates, ends in an idolatry, or creature-worship. Unguarded modes of adoring the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar; the cultus—not harmless because symbolical—of a special portion or aspect of the creaturely nature, like the Sacred Heart; are an outcome of this wrong deification of our Lord's humanity.

And then, by a curious though natural countermove, that habit of mind which begins by losing sight of the true manhood in the Godhead, follows on to lose the true Godhead in the manhood. An example may be found in the extravagant use of the title—quite correct in itself—of "Mother of God," which is heard in some quarters, as if the Eternal Godhead itself owed its origin, and consequently its obedience, to Mary. The same tendency is observable in the use of language which implies that the Deity in Christ was mortal. In hymns and other devotions there is a fondness for such phrases as "the dying God." People speak of the piercing of God's hands, the marring of

God's face, and the like.[1] Many of those who speak in such terms are well-instructed persons, who do not themselves suppose the Divine nature in Christ to have been merged in the human, or *vice versa*, and are only led on by a love of paradox. But the love of paradox needs to be narrowly watched. The ignorant, and still more the half-taught, are apt to be misled by what they hear; and the result of feeding much upon these paradoxes is that men lose on the one side the solace and strength which comes from a right conception of Christ's humanity, and are driven into seeking from His blessed Mother or elsewhere a sympathy which they dare not claim from Him; and, on the other side, with the inconsistency which has been observed before, they fall into sentimental, sensuous, fondling, modes of addressing our adorable Lord, which both dishonour Him and enfeeble the soul of the worshipper.

[1] An isolated expression in Holy Scripture is, indeed, quoted in support of such language, where S. Paul—if the text be correct—speaks of "the Church of God, which He purchased with His own Blood" (Acts xx. 28). But there is considerable doubt about the original text. It seems not improbable that the author wrote, "with the Blood of His own Son." If we take the text as it stands, it must be observed that, according to all New Testament analogy, "the Church of God (τοῦ Θεοῦ)" must mean the Church of God the Father; so that any attempt to connect the words in such a manner as would suit an Eutychian view, would be found really to lead further, and to end in Patripassianism. But the words, "His own," stand in so emphatic a position in the Greek that we might well render, "which He purchased with the Blood which is His own." Such a turn at once suggests that it is "His own" in a sense different from the usual sense; as, for instance, because of the essential unity between Himself and the Son whose Blood it is. Even if we could understand the Son Himself to be intended by the word "God," the very emphasis laid on the words "His own" would preclude an Eutychian interpretation.

In order to approach Him aright, and to gain from the approach what He desires to bestow, it is as necessary to be clear from all confusion of the two natures, as to reject all separation into two persons. The Godhead is real, and the manhood is real, as neither could be, if they were in any way mixed and compounded. The Godhead is as pure and unadulterated as the Godhead of the Father; the manhood is as simple and as creaturely as in her from whom He took it, or as in us. The union between the two natures is indeed a union, and not a mere juxtaposition of two disconnected things; but the union is found in the oneness of Christ's Person, and not in any physical combination, nor yet in any metaphysical transubstantiation of either essence into the other. Our own constitution again supplies us with an illustration. Spirit and body in us are not merely put side by side, and insulated from each other. In a great variety of ways they affect and are affected by each other. But each retains its own proper nature. An attack of rheumatism in a man's shoulder has an influence upon his spiritual condition, but it would be absurd to speak of his spirit as having the rheumatism. And the communing of a man's spirit with God makes demands upon his body, forcing it to be wakeful, to assume a reverent attitude to weep, and the like; but it is not his body which thus communes with God. The reason why they affect each other is because they are both equally *his* not because of any confusion between themselves.

In something of the same way we may say it is

with Christ. Mary is rightly called *Theotokos*, because her Child was, "from the birth, and from the womb, and from the conception," very God; but she was not the mother of His Godhead. We may legitimately speak of the Blood of God the Son, but it is not *as* God that He has blood—it is the Blood of One who is God, but the blood belongs to His human nature and not to the Divine. And again, it is true that Jesus Christ came down from heaven, but He was not Jesus Christ before He came down,—that is to say, He had no human nature before His Incarnation. To say that those hands which were tied with swaddling-clothes were the same which made the stars on high may be passed over in poetry among those who understand; but it is not true, except in the sense that He whose hands they are was the Agent in creation. His human nature had no part in that work; it was as God alone that He did it. The Person is absolutely the same; but the natures retain their own properties. There is a real and vital union between them; but it is because both are *His*, the one as much as the other. "Of both natures," says Hooker, "there is a co-operation often, an association always, but never any mutual participation whereby the properties of the one are infused into the other."

§ 10.

We believe, then, that in the Incarnation the two natures were perfectly and inseparably joined in the one Person of the Word, not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh, nor by the conversion of the flesh into

Godhead, nor yet by the conversion of both into an intermediate compound. It remains to be pointed out that the two natures thus united are not only true, but complete. It is difficult to say what constitutes our idea of the completeness of Deity. God cannot be broken up or divided. Such a thing as a mutilated or diminished Godhead is an impossible conception. If there was Godhead at all, it was full and perfect Godhead. And the human nature which our Lord assumed was likewise a complete human nature. This is a matter more easily tested. If the component elements of man are spirit, soul, and body, these are all found in Christ; and the mutual relations of the three are the same in Him as in us, except where sin, in our case, has deranged the normal connexion.

He had—He has—a body. It gathered shape, like ours, from the maternal substance. It grew; it walked; it ate and drank, and needed to be sustained by eating and drinking. It hungered and thirsted; it was weary and slept; it sweated; it bled; it died. Before it rose transformed from the dead, men saw it, gazed upon it, handled it, struck it, embalmed and buried it. They found it to be a solid material thing, subject to the same laws as ours. Though, on occasion, things which most of us cannot do with our bodies were done by it, yet His Body itself was not on that account different from ours; and if our Lord walked on the water of the lake, so did S. Peter when our Lord bade him.

And to our Lord's body was joined a spirit. It

was the organ by which He prayed to His God and Father. In it He took deep note of spiritual facts: "Jesus knew in His spirit" (S. Mark ii. 8). In it He rejoiced and sorrowed: "In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit" (S. Luke x. 21); "He was troubled in spirit and testified" (S. John xiii. 21). In it He felt the emotion of a moral indignation:—"He sighed deeply in His spirit" (S. Mark viii. 12): "He groaned in the spirit" (S. John xi. 33). It was the seat of His inmost human self-knowledge: He "was justified in the spirit" (1 Tim. iii. 16). It was the last retreat of His human life: "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit" (S. Luke xxiii. 46); "In which also He went and preached unto the spirits in prison" (1 Pet. iii. 19).

And He had a soul. "My soul," says Christ, "is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death" (S. Matt. xxvi. 38). The heresy of Apollinaris consisted in a well-meant attempt to explain the unity of Christ's Person by teaching that His humanity had no rational soul, but only the animal soul, and that the Eternal Word supplied its place. The Gospels are against that mode of getting rid of the mystery. Loosely as the word "soul" is sometimes used in the New Testament, it cannot be doubted that Christ had and has a rational soul entirely like ours—except that His is perfect, and ours are not—when we regard the faculties of which He stood possessed. He marvelled; He learned. What once He had perceived, He thenceforth knew. He had no opinions, no conjectures; we are never told that He forgot, nor

even that He remembered, which would imply a degree of forgetting; we are not expressly told of His arriving at truths by the process of reasoning them out; but He reasons them out for others. It is not recorded that He took counsel, or formed plans; but He desired, and He purposed, and He did one thing with a view to another.

This intelligent aim necessitates also a genuine human will. The Monotheletes, who suppose that there is but one will in Christ—the will which belongs to Him as Son of God—ought logically to go further, and adopt the whole Apollinarian view, and deny the rational soul. For where there is intelligent perception and free reflexion there cannot fail to be moral choice. Moral choice is the direct outcome of intelligent reflexion; and will is the faculty for making a series of acts of moral choice, self-determined by rational reflexion. If, therefore, there was but one will in Christ, and that the Divine will, it could be guided only by His Divine knowledge, and the human perceptions had no share in its direction. If that were the case, for all moral purposes Christ's humanity was as good as worthless, and His rational soul lacked that which is its true end and object. We are, therefore, forced to believe, in spite of difficulties upon which we must touch afterwards, that Christ's human nature was possessed of active free-will like our own—except in being truly free, while ours is partially enslaved. In conforming this human will always to the Divine, lay the glory of His human self-sacrifice. When He says, "I came not to do Mine

own will, but the will of Him that sent Me" (S. John vi. 38), or, "Not My will, but Thine be done" (S. Luke xxii. 42), we may not, indeed, exclude the thought that the Son in His Divine nature is in perfect accord with the Father, but the phrases would have little meaning if He who uttered them were not supremely conscious of making a free creaturely choice.

§ 11.

But while both natures in Christ are perfect, and unimpaired by contact with each other, they are not unaffected by their union. It does not quite satisfy the mind to be told that the unity of Christ's Person is the key to the mystery of the Incarnation. For, in the first place, it would create a false impression if we made men think that the Person of the Word was incarnate, but not His Nature; whereas, indeed, the whole point of the great transaction is that it was the Incarnation of the Godhead—the taking of the manhood into God, and the impartition of the Godhead to man. And, in the second place, we may rightly ask—Was it really *possible* for the same Person to be at once both God and man? How could the two forms of consciousness exist side by side in the same subject?

This is the point where faith has least to aid it. We can do little more than revere, and wait in silence for the fuller light that is to come. To be sure that Christ is perfect God and perfect Man is the great thing; and this assurance we have. If we try to in-

vestigate further the mutual relations between the two natures, it must be in no curious idleness, but to deepen our adoring gratitude.

But while much is dark to us, the main things which we know about man and God in some measure mitigate the difficulty. As has been stated before, the natures of God and man are not contradictory of each other, as life and death are, or holiness and sin. To conceive of a union between such mutually exclusive terms as those is impossible, but not between God and man. The question was at one time frequently debated whether, if it had pleased Him, God could have become an angel, or a stone, or a vegetable, instead of man. The answer cannot be doubtful. Whatever may be in the abstract the power of God, He could not will to do such a thing, and it would not be possible for the nature of the vegetable or the stone, or even for that of an angel, to receive Him. There is no such affinity between Him and them as to prepare the way for any direct union with Him other than that which they already have. Only through man, the high priest and mediator of creation, can the rest of creation become partaker of God. It would be false to say, as some ancient thinkers did, that Deity and humanity are, at bottom, the same thing; for in that case there would be no true Incarnation after all,—the Godhead would merely have assumed, in the birth of Christ, one fashion of its own being. But it is true to say that humanity has not attained its perfection, and is like an eye without the light, until it is crowned and ful-

filled by the Incarnation. It is not Deity itself; but it is a germ which, by correspondence with God's grace, can grow up into being a true complement or counterpart to Deity.

Thus there is nothing which outrages our reason in the thought of a human nature being personally united with the Divine and assimilated to it. It does not destroy its humanity. Our bodies, even in this life, are brought by discipline under the dominion of the spirit to such an extent that we are not surprised to learn what is their destiny hereafter. They are to become spiritual bodies—bodies, that is, with characteristics of the spirit imparted to them; but they do not for that reason become spirits, and cease to be bodies. So we may believe the human nature to be capable of such subservience to the Divine as to receive many powers which were quite beyond itself to develope, and yet to remain true human nature from the first stage to the last, never parting with any one of the distinctive features of manhood, yet receiving a progressive conformation to the Divine. This was what took place in Christ. His human nature began at the beginning, and from the very beginning it was the organ of the Divine. As growth is human, it grew. "Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man" (S. Luke ii. 52). One faculty after another, in due order, awoke, and exerted itself, and throve, and gained strength. First came what seems the purely animal life of infancy; and then the dawning and expanding reason; and then the conscious spiritual life which says, "Wist ye not

that I must be in My Father's house?" (S. Luke ii. 49). And so the progress went on, physical, intellectual, moral, spiritual, up to the Transfiguration, and so to death and through death to resurrection, and from resurrection to ascension,—the whole harmonious human constitution appropriating more and more fully the Nature which dwelt in it, and becoming a more and more adequate vehicle for the Divine, yet never, even on the throne of heaven, ceasing to be purely human, entirely "consubstantial with us."

§ 12.

It is, however, comparatively easy to imagine how the human nature could lend itself to receive the Divine. "The very cause," says Hooker, "of His taking upon Him our nature was to change it, to better the quality, and to advance the condition thereof, although in no sort to abolish the substance which He took, nor to infuse into it the natural forces and properties of His Deity." Far harder it is to reach any intellectual notion of the effect of the union upon His Divine nature. How was it accommodated to the conditions in which it appeared on earth? How was it made—to use a favourite word of S. Cyril's—"bearable" to the inferior nature which it assumed? Perhaps, if the nature which it assumed had been from the first in the full glory of its present heavenly maturity, the wonder would not have seemed so great; but how could the Son of God become an embryo, a babe, a dying and a dead man?

One great saying of S. Paul's flashes upon the subject all the light which in this life we are likely to obtain. Exhorting the Philippians not to stand upon their rights, but voluntarily, for love's sake, to give them up to one another as not worth a contest, he adduces the example of "Christ Jesus; who, being originally in the form of God, deemed it not a prize to be clutched at to be" as He then was "on an equality with God, but" by His own act "emptied Himself, taking the form of a bondman, coming to be in the likeness of men" (Phil. ii. 6, 7). Round this central statement gather others of a less explicit nature. What infinite suggestiveness lies in the reserve of those similar words to the Corinthians: "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that for your sakes He became poor, rich though He was, that ye by His poverty might be rich" (2 Cor. viii. 9)! The Hebrews are told that He was "made a little"—or, "for a little while"—"lower than the angels" (Heb. ii. 9). More faintly still, the same thought is constantly implied wherever, instead of saying that our Lord "came," or "came into the world," we are told that He "came down" (*e.g.* S. John vi. 38; Eph. iv. 9). The mystery comes in sight again when our Lord, in His last prayer, prays for the restitution of His original glory as of a thing of which He had for a time been dispossessed: "Now glorify Thou Me, Father, with Thyself, with the glory which I had, before the world was, with Thee" (S. John xvii. 5).

Perhaps the significance of these profound words has as yet hardly been so thoroughly explored in the

Church as it might be, and the doctrine which they contain may be among the things which have yet to be worked out. Elaborate systems of Divinity are to be found which pass them over without examination. We cannot, indeed, hope at present to penetrate deep into the mystery, because the conditions of the Divine consciousness lie so far beyond our apprehension; but it is possible that a more firm grasp of what has been revealed on the subject may help to dispel some confusions. Certainly any refusal to believe in the self-emptying of the Eternal Son, any attempt to minimise it and explain it away, seems to impair the completeness of the Incarnation. Without it, our Lord's earthly life assumes to us an aspect of unreality. If we avoid the danger of falling into the Eutychian error of attributing Divine omniscience to the human intelligence of the new-born Child of Mary, we are apt to fall into the opposite error of Nestorianism, and to suppose that the new-born Child, with Its natural human ignorance, was not as yet really and truly the Word Himself, but only mysteriously annexed to the Word, while the Word Himself lived on somewhere else, outside, so to speak, of the human being which He had annexed: which would seem to reduce the earthly career of Jesus to an illusion,—the setting in motion of a human-looking thing, not the real living of a human life.

It has been pointed out before, and it must be borne in mind in all theological investigations, that we who live in time are not capable of understanding the relations between time and eternity. We cannot,

therefore, say what may be the aspect of the temporal humiliation of the Son, contemplated from the point of view of His absolute eternity, any more than we can say what may be the aspect of the whole history of creation, of which it forms a part. The purely Divine side of the matter is incomprehensible to us. What abiding facts in the Divine life underlie those things which necessarily appear to us as actions on God's part, no human thought can ascertain. But our not understanding another side of things must not be allowed to throw doubt upon that side which we can understand. We are not afraid to affirm that it was an event in the life of God, when He spake and the world was created. As observed by us, something new then took place, which modified the conditions in which God lives. And when, again, the Redeemer was born at Bethlehem, it does not concern us much to inquire about the supra-temporal side of the event, but we say that, as observed, and truly observed by us, a still greater event took place then in the life of God, by which not only the external conditions of His existence were modified, but the internal also, and He Himself, in the person of the Son, became what He was not before. As, by creation, He accommodated Himself to coexist with finite and free beings, so, in the Incarnation, the Son accommodated Himself to experience, in His own person, the conditions under which we free but finite beings live. The language of the Bible does not set before us the life of Christ as being lived simultaneously upon two parallel planes, with a continuous and unbroken range of consciousness pro-

ceeding concurrently upon both.[1] That is not the true notion of eternity. It cannot be regarded as a succession, moving simultaneously with temporal succession. When, therefore, we are following the life of Christ upon earth, we need not perplex our minds with the notion of His enjoying *at the same time* a heavenly life of equality with the Father. However an eternal being might describe what was done, it seems as if we, here below, must understand that when the Son "came down from heaven," it was a real coming down; not one in which the Son merely added to an unchangeable Divine consciousness another, humbler, human consciousness, but a coming down in which the Divine Person actually gave up something which He possessed before, and submitted His whole self to privation and limitation. Instead of imagining a Divine life of Christ lived aloof from the human, it would appear truer to think of the one as completely lodged in the other, and conditioned by it. He left the glory which He eternally had with the Father, to become conscious, in time, of earthly limitations.

[1] There is, perhaps, but one passage of the New Testament which seems to lend any direct countenance to this way of looking at things. In the Authorised Version, our Lord says to Nicodemus, "No man hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man which is in heaven" (S. John iii. 13). The paradox here seems complete. He "came down;" yet there He "is." But those who have the best right to speak tell us that the last clause does not stand in the most ancient text at all. If it is an integral part of the Gospel, it might, perhaps, be interpreted to mean that heaven, although He has left it, is essentially the home of Him who is now Son of Man; or even that, by constant fellowship with God, He lives upon earth an unearthly life, conversant with heavenly realities, as S. Paul teaches that it is our privilege also to do.

This belief involves many mysteries which we cannot solve. We cannot understand how it was possible for the Son to set bounds in any sense to His own infinity, or to suspend, if we may so speak, His consciousness of exercising Divine knowledge and power, in order to enter into earthly conditions. We cannot understand how, in those days of His humiliation, the Almighty Word was still carrying on that work which He performs in nature and history, and how from the new-born Babe still radiated forth (as assuredly they did) those influences which maintain the unity and order of the world. We cannot understand how the essential life of the Blessed Trinity in heaven was affected by the coming down of the Son into the created order. It may be a partial answer to one of these difficulties to say that God governs the world, not, as we govern, by consecutive exertions of attention and force, but by being to it what He is. And for another we must remember that the coming down of the Son at His Incarnation is always spoken of in Scripture as corresponding to a self-sacrifice on the part of the Father, who "gave" Him. But whatever difficulties remain unsolved, and whether or not the account here given of our Lord's humiliation be the true one, this, at least, we must believe—that the little Babe which lay in the manger of Bethlehem, with Its undeveloped mind and spirit, was the Eternal Son, and nothing less. It was the personal Word in all His fulness which was made flesh; and the Word was all made flesh at once. He Himself "tabernacled among us." "In Him," says S. Paul,

"dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead in bodily wise" (Col. ii. 9), and the saying holds true of His earthly sojourn as well as of His present heavenly state. What men saw and handled during His three and thirty years was the Word Himself. The Word Himself became subject to time and space, to growth and change. So true was the self-emptying on the part of the Word as to give room for all the experiences of a sinless humanity, from the blind life before birth and onwards. Deity was not laid aside; it could not be; but the exercise of some of its attributes was, while the Word moved through the days of His humiliation. The glory of our Lord's redeeming love is obscured if we lose sight of this. "In those very homely facts and phrases," says an ancient Greek writing formerly assigned to S. Athanasius, "lies exactly the point of Christianity."

To part in appearance only with the fruition of Divine prerogatives would be to impose upon us with a pretence of self-sacrifice; but to part with it in reality was to manifest most perfectly the true nature of God. It cannot be said that this view presents to us a spectacle of mutilated or diminished Godhead, such as we have stated to be impossible. None of the Divine powers were lost to Christ while He was upon earth. The very act by which He laid aside the enjoyment of His omnipotence was a proof that He was omnipotent. "He emptied Himself." It was His own doing. If He threw Himself into the limitations of human knowledge and of human power, it was because He chose to do so; and all the time that

those Divine powers were (in S. Irenaeus' phrase) "quiescent" within Him, they still were His. Had He chosen to revoke His self-emptying, there was nothing outside Himself to hinder Him. "The weakness of God," says the Apostle, "is stronger than men" (1 Cor. i. 25); and, however it might have appeared at the moment, on looking back, at least, the self-suppression of Christ — that perfect mastery of His glorious attributes, symbolized in the prophetic vision by the "horns coming out of His hand" (Hab. iii. 4), and displayed in "the hiding of His power"—"the mighty powers," as it has been well said, "held under a mighty control"—this is the greatest of His miracles. It was, we may reverently say, the only way to show us the Father. Men are too ready to look upon God as crushing force and cold omniscience. Had Christ appeared on earth with all His splendours about Him, He would have perpetuated our mistake. But He took another way. It is the very essence of the Word to be the Divine expression of the inmost nature of God. The inmost nature of God is love. And when Christ emptied Himself of the exercise of omnipotence and infinite knowledge, He did not empty Himself of love. He divested Himself only of that which would have dazzled and distracted us, in order that we might see His love more perfectly. The self-sacrifice of Bethlehem, leading on to that of Calvary, leaves no room for doubt. The Babe, lying in the manger, is the "sign" (S. Luke ii. 12) which convinces us of a richer theology than we could have guessed at, and makes us cry, with the angels, "Glory to God in the highest."

Chapter VI.

The Atoning Work of Christ.

Christ the natural Mediator between God and Man by reason of His eternal Relations with Both—The Incarnation to have been expected apart from Redemption—Redemption possible to God by other means—Redemption not the only benefit of the Incarnation—Incarnation the eternal Purpose of God—Simplicity of Catholic Doctrine of Atonement—Christ's Life reveals to men the Character of God—Its Meaning made explicit by His Words—The Reconciliation to be effected not a mutual Reconciliation—It originates with the Father Himself—Sympathy of the Father with the Sufferings of the Son—The Atonement reveals the Divine Hatred of Sin—Atoning Value of Christ's Life as that of the Representative Man—Its Sinlessness tested by Temptation—A Life of perfect Obedience—under Suffering—and Death—Unique Character of Christ's Death—His Death regarded as a Confession—Penal Nature of the Dereliction on the Cross—No Substitution of Christ for Sinners—Salvation by the Cross itself, not by Theories concerning it.

§ 1.

Christ is the Mediator between God and the world by no arbitrary act of selection. He is the Mediator by nature, and the only complete Mediator who can be imagined. This arises from the position which He eternally occupies in relation to God on the one hand, and to man on the other.

The Son of God is, as we have seen, the absolute expression of the whole being and character of God.

He is—even before and apart from creation—God as revealed, the Light as streaming forth from the Source of Light. Whatever communication can be made from God to creation—angelic, human, or inferior—must needs be made through the Son of God; and whatever approach is made by creation towards God must needs be likewise made through Him, and cannot be made otherwise. This mediation of the Son is as necessary for sinless as for sinful creatures. When Christ says, "I am the Way; no one cometh unto the Father but by Me" (S. John xiv. 6), He expresses, not a rule of privilege and of conventional arrangement, but an inherent necessity of the case.

And as He is naturally the expression of God, so is He naturally the Archetype of man, who is made after Him as his pattern. And by the Incarnation the Word became actually, what He always was ideally, the perfect Man. We see Him as "the Son of Man." This title, which He invented and chose for Himself, signifies that He has, by actual derivation from human parentage, everything that is characteristic of humanity, even as, by actual derivation from His Father, He has everything that is characteristic of Godhead. He is not merely a man, as one out of many similars; not merely man, as if in the abstract, and disconnected from the rest of us; nor the son of a man, as if He obtained His humanity from some partial source; nor a son of man, as if others might conceivably hold the same sort of position in the race. He is "the Son of Man," the supreme production of the human kind, into whom all that is of the essence of manhood is

fully poured. Though living under true historical conditions, "of the seed of David" (2 Tim. ii. 8), and educated as a Jew, He yet transcends all national peculiarities and all the peculiarities of His age; and what S. Paul says of the mystical body of Christ is true of Christ's own life, that it has not the exclusive features of Jew or Greek, barbarian or Scythian, bond or free, nor even of male or female (Col. iii. 11; Gal. iii. 28). He is the perfect type of them all. Not even any predominant excellences are seen in Him: He is not the poet, or the statesman, or the man of science, or the artist; He cannot be distinguished by the possession of the active or the passive virtues. He is simply man, as man. It was His, through the virgin birth, to gather up and harmonize whatever true constituent of human nature is found in fragments in us all, and so to be the fit interpreter of the best side of every one of us. Holding, therefore, as He does, this twofold relation, as the Son of Man and the Son of God, He is the natural Mediator between the two, perfectly representing God to man, and perfectly representing man to God.

§ 2.

There is no need to think that it was sin which caused the Eternal Son to become man. The mediatorial function is essentially His, and it seems as if it could never have been thoroughly fulfilled by anything short of an Incarnation. The Church has not pronounced judgment on the question whether Christ would have been incarnate had there been no Fall;

but the advance of thought in two opposite directions appears to converge upon the belief that it would have been so. The naturalness and fitness of the Incarnation in itself, apart from sin, is brought out by considering alike the source, and the course, of the work of creation.

In the first place, the source of creation is more clearly seen than perhaps at any previous epoch in the inner relations of the Persons of the Blessed Trinity. We begin to have a richer understanding of the affinity of the Word to the creation, and to feel increasingly how even His existence before the foundation of the world was, in a sense, the basis and beginning of it. His immanence in the world as its guiding principle seems to have pointed forward to a more explicit manifestation of Himself. The very nature of the Son of God contains, we may say, a predisposition to enter into the closest connexion with the world and with man. S. Athanasius, after mentioning with approval the Greek speculation that the universe is a great organic body, goes on significantly to say, "If, therefore, the Word of God is in the world as in a body, what is there strange in affirming that He has also entered into men? What is there incredible, if, being in men, He reveals Himself among them? It is no strange thing if the Word, who orders all things and gives life to all things, and who willed a revelation to come through men, has used a human body for the manifestation of the truth and making known of the Father."

And, on the other hand, what we know of the

course of the history of nature leads up to the same expectation. It is true that the doctrine of evolution has not yet attained the consistency of proven fact; but enough is already certain to convince us that there has been an onward and upward movement in created things. The inorganic, the organic, the sentient, have prepared for the rational. Man recapitulates them in himself, and takes authority over them. But must the evolution stop there? Here is a being capable of knowing and loving God—a being like to God, and with a "heart restless until it rests in Him," a being capable (as we know now by blessed experience) of appreciating an Incarnation. Can we imagine that he was not intended to receive it, and was not made for the purpose? If it were so, it would seem to stultify that upward striving implanted in nature before sin came. It would be like the sudden and unaccountable stopping short of some series in a calculating-machine. The mind which has followed the process of the evolution thus far stands demanding that the final step should be taken. The aptitude of the Word for becoming man, and the aptitude of man for receiving the Word, together claim the Incarnation as their natural result. Instead of being surprised to find the Word made flesh, we might rather have been surprised had it not been so; and instead of turning to the Fall for an explanation and a cause of the great mystery, we may wonder at the imperturbable mercy which held on upon its course in spite of man's rebellion.

§ 3.

Neither have we a right so to limit the powers of the Creator as to say that sin could not possibly have been arrested and atoned for without the Incarnation. It attributes too great a skill to the author of sin, if we try to make out that no resource was left to God, if He wished to be rid of it, but to give His Son to die for it. To have succeeded in reducing God to such straits might well appear like a triumph for Satan, even though the ultimate victory remains with God. Sin can be made too much of. It is, indeed, a vast and terrible factor in the life of the world. Of necessity it occupies a great share of our attention. All our thoughts are affected by its presence, and to fight against it is, in a sense, the main business of our lives. It may easily appear to us, then, as if nothing short of the Divine Sacrifice could have delivered us from it. Men sometimes have even maintained that an infinite ransom for sin was required, on the ground that the offence itself was infinite. But this is not true. Sin is a finite thing, and not an infinite. Those creaturely minds and wills which embody it are themselves limited; and it has no existence outside of them. It cannot, therefore, be measured and weighed in the balance against God. If God's only object was to make an end of sin, we may conceive of His being able to attain the object without so stupendous an act as the Incarnation. It has been argued that if anything less than the Incarnation could have put an end to sin, God would

not have committed Himself to such a waste of power. But this argument is based on the assumption that to provide a remedy for sin was the sole purpose of the Incarnation. If God had other, greater, objects in view, the argument falls to the ground. Some new start for the human race might, perhaps, have been found on a less exalted footing. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews appeals, not to our sense of logical necessity, but to our sense of moral fitness, when he twice says that God's method of redemption was that which in the circumstances "became" Him (Heb. ii. 10; vii. 26). Not to have redeemed at all, but to have left the world, however guilty, to its usurping conqueror, would have been, as S. Athanasius points out, in a high degree "unbecoming and unnatural." But if it became God to redeem, there was no way so becoming as that which He took. And its becomingness is brought out in a peculiarly striking way, if we suppose that the Incarnation is no afterthought consequent upon the Fall, but the very thing for which man was created. Nothing could be so dignified and so touching as to proceed simply with the Divine plan—not restoring the world first, and then effecting the Incarnation in humanity so restored; but fully accepting the Fall and its consequences, and triumphing over it, and even turning it to account, by the love which did in spite of it what it had purposed to do independently of it.

§ 4.

We are permitted, conversely, to perceive that the Incarnation and Death of Christ have actually brought us blessings far wider than the removal of sin. It has often been pointed out that the Nicene Creed itself suggests that the Son's condescension had other purposes in view. "For us men," it says, "and for our salvation He came down from heaven." The two clauses do not mean precisely the same thing. Christ had other benefits to bring to "us men" besides our salvation.

He has united the Godhead and creation in a way in which nothing short of the Incarnation could (so far as we know) have united them. The revelation of God to man which we now possess through witnessing the historical life of Christ is infinitely clearer and closer at hand than anything which we can imagine vouchsafed in any other way. Through that great transaction man is not merely restored to the first estate which Adam occupied, but to one immeasurably higher. Though still suffering from the corruption which the first Adam entailed to his descendants, we are at the same time enriched by the communication of the Divine nature in a way which Adam never knew. And the gathering up of the human race in Christ imparts a unity and solidity to mankind, and to the universe through mankind, which, so far as we can judge, was otherwise unattainable, much exceeding the unity and solidity which existed before the Fall.

And are we to suppose that these benefits would never have been given to men but for their transgression? Are they indeed a premium upon human disobedience? Did God intend something less glorious for humanity as He originally designed it, and then, when He saw us in rebellion, devise for us these overwhelming gifts? In that case the famous apostrophe, "*O felix culpa!*"—"O happy fault!" expresses a literal truth, and we have not only to thank God for giving us a Redeemer, but to thank Adam for drawing down to us, by his sin, One who was so much more than a redeemer. The facts seem to be against such a theory. We can hardly think that God would have punished the race for loyalty to its Maker by withholding what now He has bestowed, and what He always knew Himself able to bestow. Long ages after sin has disappeared from existence, and almost from the memory of the saints, creation will be rejoicing more and more in the abiding fruits of the Incarnation; and it seems inconceivable that it should owe them all to its own aberration from the Creator's original design.

§ 5.

That the Incarnation was not dependent upon the Fall seems to be distinctly involved in more than one passage of Holy Scripture, especially in S. Paul's Epistles of the Captivity. He tells the Ephesians that "before the foundation of the world"—therefore certainly before the Fall of man—God "elected

us, having predestined us unto adoption through Jesus Christ unto Himself" (Eph. i. 4, 5); and that, at length, He has "made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure, which good pleasure He purposed before in Christ unto a dispensation of the fulness of the times,"—that is, He was reserving the announcement of His purpose until the ripe moment should be brought about,—and this good pleasure was "to sum up all things in Christ, the things in the heavens, and the things on the earth, in Him" (Eph. i. 9, 10). And again, S. Paul declares himself commissioned "to divulge what is the dispensation of the mystery that has been hidden away since the ages in God who created all things, that now should be made known to the principalities and the authorities in the heavenly places, through the Church, the manifold wisdom of God, according to a purpose of the ages, which purpose He formed in the Christ, Jesus our Lord" (Eph. iii. 9–11). It may be readily acknowledged that these passages, and similar ones in the Epistle to the Colossians and elsewhere, are more or less tinged by thoughts of redemption and suffering, because S. Paul's purpose is rather practical than speculative, and he deals with things as they are; but it is at least clear from them that the Incarnation, and our union with and in the Incarnate Son, was the eternal purpose of God, formed before—that is, independently of—the actual history of creation, and not devised after the event. When the "foundation of the world" was laid, it was laid with a view to the Incarnation. The only

question is whether the Fall itself and its reparation was part of the fundamental design.

Those who hold that without it the Incarnation would not have taken place are bound to consider that the Fall, as an indispensable preliminary to it, was eternally in the Creator's counsels; and this is hardly possible to maintain. That God foreknew, indeed, the disobedience of His creature cannot be doubted; but that He intended and planned it, with the design of thus repairing it, cannot be asserted without impiety. It would destroy all the sinfulness of sin, or rather it would make God Himself the author of it and so sinful, if we could believe that His eternal purpose involved sin as a necessary element. And in that case the love also, which is shown in redemption, is emptied of its glory; for its task is wholly self-chosen and self-imposed. However difficult it may be for us to adjust our conceptions of the relation between the two, God's foreknowledge and God's foreordaining are distinct conceptions. In the first place we may repeat what has already been said that God's foreknowledge in no way determines the future, but is rather determined by it. The future becomes no dead certainty because God foresees it; it remains still and for ever a living thing. There is always room for movement and free play between the Divine will and the creaturely will. "It may be" is the word which our Lord puts in His Father's mouth (S. Luke xx. 13). The creature does not execute a design laid down for it in detail beforehand, and God does not will beforehand what the creature does. Permissively, indeed,

He wills it, or it could not happen, but not actively or as its author. There is no more difficulty in thinking of God's permitting sin in the sphere of His eternal counsels than in the course of history; but on the other hand it would be no more impossible for Him actively to will sin in the course of history than actively to will it in His eternal counsels. Thus we may believe that, while the Atonement was from eternity the conditional purpose of God, the Incarnation was His unconditional purpose—that He willed His Son to suffer and die for men if man should fall, but to become man in any case.[1] The drawing of the creation into union with the Creator, "in the Christ, Jesus our Lord," was contained in the very idea of creation; the circumstances and conditions depended upon the way in which men might choose to act. And, as it proved, men chose to act in that way which served more than any other to manifest the strength and tenderness of God's love.

§ 6.

In considering the redemptive work of our Lord Jesus Christ, the human conscience demands that the

[1] The popular phrase, "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Rev. xiii. 8), is not rightly quoted. A comparison with Rev. xvii. 8 on the one hand, and Rev. v. 12 on the other, will show clearly that the words, "from the foundation of the world," belong, not to the participial clause, "the Lamb that is slain," but to the main verb, "whose names have not been written." It refers, therefore, to the predestination of those who are saved, not to the eternal nature of Christ's sacrifice. This latter thought is expressed more clearly elsewhere, as in 1 S. Pet. i. 20, where the words are, "before,"—not merely "from"—"the foundation of the world."

theory of it should be simple. No one can rest with confidence upon what is, on the face of it, an artifice, a scheme. What are called forensic doctrines have seemed to satisfy many hearts, but only so far as they were right metaphors, parables hinting at a fuller truth which was consciously or unconsciously felt to lie behind them. If our Lord's work be regarded as a cleverly devised legal contrivance, it repels instead of attracting; or if it does not actually repel, it invites criticism and admiration rather than worship and devotion. It is only when we strongly apprehend the naturalness of it all that we are able to embrace it with a hearty faith. Our Lord's redeeming work may be infinitely complicated. It may have many more aspects and a greater number of effects than we can imagine. It would not be natural were it otherwise; for all that is natural is complex. But its complications must be those which belong to life, capable of being resolved into a simple and majestic unity, and not the complications of a studied mechanism.

This we firmly believe to be the character of the Catholic doctrine of Redemption. However deep it goes, however subtle its adaptation to its purposes, however varied its results, the whole of Redemption rises, as it were without an effort, out of the fact that the Redeemer was what He was, and acted always according to His nature. We have already drawn attention to the truth that there was nothing far-fetched in the choice of a redeemer, but that He who undertook it, undertook it because it was His natural place to do so. And in like manner, His method of

doing what He came on earth to do was natural and simple. There was no going out of His way, no straining after bye-ends and cross-purposes. From moment to moment He lived the life which (being what He was) He could not but live; and it had the infinite effects which (that life being His) it could not help having. When He, to whom everything pointed as the obvious Mediator between God and men, began and carried through to the end His historic work, His mode of operation was only this—to be Himself, very God and very Man, and to act becomingly in the circumstances. In the unity of His Person all contradiction was reconciled, and the same things which became Him as Son of God became Him as Son of Man, and the very same line of events showed Him throughout as the ideal representative both of the one nature and of the other. This double aspect of each and all of our Lord's works must never be forgotten. He was not by one series of acts showing Himself as Son of God, and by another as Son of Man. There was in Him no alternation between two parts which were to be played. He was continuously and harmoniously both. Thus we may, for clearness of study, contemplate His whole life and death, first as the manifestation of God to man, and secondly as the representation of man to God.

§ 7.

The true manifestation of God to man is the first great need in the Atonement. For the main object of the Atonement is a moral not a legal one. It is

not only satisfaction for past offences, but the removal of sin for the future. And sin for the future can only be precluded by fully persuading the wills of men to give it up. And the only chance of their being able to give it up lies in their being brought into frank and normal relations with God Himself. This was an impossibility for man as he was. His alienation from God was too deep to be easily got over. He had learned to travestie and caricature to himself the nature and mind of God in a thousand ways. The more unlike to God he became, so much the more he "thought wickedly that God was even such an one as himself" (Ps. l. 21). To the minds of the heathen in general, God was no better than men, and would condemn Himself if He condemned them; or He was indifferent to their actions, and, as an early controversialist against Christianity affirmed, was "no more angry with men than with apes or flies;" or God was capricious and revengeful and implacable, and the utmost that could be done was to endeavour to keep Him in good temper with fair words and frequent offerings; or perhaps He appeared, as in some of the higher Gentile systems, and to some amongst the Jews, as a sternly pure being, extreme to mark what was done amiss, who might give a happier lot in another world in exchange for ascetic self-torture in this, or for rigid observance of a rule more exact than that which He had Himself imposed. But in whichever way the error travelled, mankind at large had lost the true conception of God as a righteous Father; that is, as One who must needs

be at war with sin wherever sin was to be found, but who at the same time loved men with an intense and personal affection, and was therefore impelled equally by love and by righteousness to seek to deliver them from sin.

This was the character displayed in Christ to draw men back to God. Prophets among the Israelites had striven to portray such a character; and more dimly moral philosophers among the Gentiles had set forth fragments of it. But the fullest of inspired descriptions could not have the same effect as the sight of an actual life lived among men, simply and necessarily exhibiting at every turn the mind of God. In all the infinitely varied circumstances of that life, in dealing with saints and in dealing with sinners, there was one continuous manifestation of the Father's heart; so that without a touch of exaggeration Christ could say, "He that hath seen Me, hath seen the Father" (S. John xiv. 9). For although they did not see the Father in person, they saw One who not only resembled Him exactly, so that there was nothing in the Son unlike that which was in the Father, but He whom they saw was so entirely one with the Father that He could have no imaginable being apart from the Father, nor the Father apart from Him.

§ 8.

Our Lord's words gave articulate and explicit expression to the message of His life. What He did and was amongst men no doubt proved the most eloquent way of setting forth the truth about God.

Yet as words without deeds are disbelieved, so deeds without words are misunderstood. If our Lord had been content to work His miracles and say nothing about the God who had sent Him, or, in His own phrase, if He had "come in His own name" (S. John v. 43), He would have had it all His own way. Men might even have contrasted Him invidiously with the God whom they so misinterpreted. But with the utmost persistence and vigilance He made it His rule to trace every deed of His, and every word, to its source in the Father's heart, as something "given" Him to do or to say. He claimed to be the absolute and only exponent of the Father's mind. Amidst all the differences between the Fourth Gospel and the others, this great feature stands out perfectly clear in all alike: "No man knoweth the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son is pleased to reveal Him" (S. Matt. xi. 27). And the main characteristic of the new revelation is precisely that fatherliness of God towards men. The language was indeed not entirely new to men. Isaiah had said, "Now, O Lord, Thou art our Father" (Isa. lxiv. 8); and S. Paul could quote a heathen testimony of like nature, "We are also His offspring" (Acts xvii. 28). But not only were such expressions rare before;—they were mainly intended to appeal to a fatherhood of origination rather than to a fatherliness of disposition. And while Christ revealed more clearly than ever that God was the ultimate source of our being, He revealed in a still more striking and persuasive way that the heart which is the source of our being is

truly, and in spite of all our sin, a Father's heart. It is by the perfect way in which He did this, by word and deed, that Christ is to us the ideal Prophet.

§ 9.

The gift of His Incarnate Son, even prior to the thought of what the Son did for us, was a proof of the Father's good will. It is difficult to understand how, in the teeth of Holy Scripture, some misrepresentations of the doctrine of the Atonement, formerly popular, but now fast vanishing away, can ever have come to exist. The expression found in the Anglican Articles, that Christ suffered "to reconcile His Father to us," is one for which a true meaning can indeed be found, but which is not itself scriptural. Often as S. Paul uses the words "reconciliation" and "to reconcile" (καταλλαγή, καταλλάσσειν, ἀποκαταλλάσσειν) of the work of Christ, he never uses them (nor does any other New Testament writer) of the reconciliation of God to His creature, but always of the reconciliation of the creature to God. A different compound of the verb (διαλλάσσειν), a slight modification of the construction, would have suggested that a *mutual* reconciliation of the two parties was effected through the good offices of Christ, who had the interests of both parties equally at heart. But S. Paul will give no colour to any theory of the kind. Christ's mediatorship is not of such a sort. He does not occupy a ground of friendly neutrality between contending parties; He is entirely on the side of both. He arranges no compromise or accommodation between

them; He exacts to the utmost the full claims of God, while He obtains for man terms infinitely better than man would ever have dreamt of

For indeed, as S. Paul's language appears studiously to convey, the alienation is not a mutual alienation. The estrangement is wholly on one side. It is only the offending party which demurs to a relation of sweet concord. The One who alone has had cause of complaint has never been unwilling to heal the breach. It is true that God has been deeply displeased and grieved and angered, and even, we might say (though the expression is not in the Bible), "offended." So long as men cleave to their sin, He cannot, of course, deal with them as if they had never done wrong or as if they were penitent for it. But He has never turned away from them, except for purposes of gracious discipline, and has never ceased for an instant to make the most generous advances to them, and to devise ways by which the race, and each individual member of it, may be brought into such conditions that the forgiveness which He longs to bestow may be actually bestowed and accepted.

If, indeed, the Father had been in any other sense "offended" with men, Christ could not have undertaken to mediate. To imagine it would be to separate the Son from the Father in a way altogether impossible. There can be no division of will or thought between the Two; for the Two are not only in moral agreement, but are one in actual essence. What the Son loves, the Father loves, and to the same degree. What the Father hates, the Son hates, and to the

same degree. The one can be no kinder and no sterner than the other. It is the will of the Father, as much as it is the will of the Son, to redeem mankind.

But more than this. The relation of the Son to the Father is such that the Son cannot be regarded as the originator of the method of redemption. Human imagination has depicted Him as coming forward in the councils of Heaven, and offering to solve the problem by an incarnation and death. It is, however, clear, that the Eternal Word initiates and can initiate nothing in the Divine schemes. So to suppose would be to make two Gods. Our Lord perpetually speaks of Himself as "sent." He speaks of a commandment given to Him, which He obeys. The Father has not accepted a spontaneous offer of self-sacrifice on the part of the Son, but has Himself imposed the self-sacrifice upon Him; while the Son, in that absolute union with the Father which is, by the Spirit, a free and loving union, rejoices to devote Himself to the task which glorifies the holiness and love of the Father. Thus it comes about that the Atonement is constantly spoken of in Scripture as in a special sense the Father's work. In the Pastoral Epistles, which exhibit S. Paul's final and most matured thought, the most frequent title of the Father, not used by him before, is that of "God our Saviour" (*e.g.* 1 Tim. i. 1). He still, indeed, speaks of Christ also, as is natural, under the title of Saviour (as 2 Tim. i. 10); but he seems at the same time to delight in tracing our salvation to its yet deeper

origin in the mind of the Father, who has saved us through His Son.

§ 10.

Nor is the good will of the Father towards men displayed in having merely desired their salvation, and willed that His Son should undertake it. Even the nature and extent of the sufferings of Christ are adduced by the sacred writers as a proof and measure of the Father's love towards us. It is not only the love of Jesus Christ Himself which is shown by the Cross. The love of the Father is, in a peculiar manner, credited with it all. If it be true to say of Christ, "He loved me, and gave Himself for me" (Gal. ii. 20), it is no less true to say, "So God loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son" (S. John iii. 16), and "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 S. John iv. 10); and again, to take the witness of another Apostle, "The love of God hath been shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Ghost which was given to us. For Christ, while we were yet weak, in due time died for ungodly ones. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die (for the good man, indeed, peradventure some one may even dare to die); but God to us commendeth His own love, because, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. v. 5, 6).

There is, indeed, this element of truth even in Patripassianism. It was, of course, impossible, in the nature of things, that the Father Himself should be

incarnate, and should suffer and die for us, while the Son remained aloof. Any imagination of the kind must spring out of a Tritheistic idea, and ignores the necessary relations of the Blessed Persons. But the Father cannot have been indifferent to the sufferings of His beloved Son. On the contrary, we may without irreverence guess from the feelings of earthly parents, which are the imperfect reflexion of His, that the suffering and grief of the Father, in delivering up His Son for us all, was even greater than what He would have endured if He could have borne it all in His own Person. A pious cottager on hearing the text, "God so loved the world," exclaimed, "Ah! that *was* love! I could have given myself, but I could never have given my son." If this be true, we may read in the Crucifixion not only the indignation and pain of the Father at men's sin, but the intensity of His love for the sinners, which made Him willing to endure such anguish, a thousandfold the more acute for being inflicted, not on Him, but on One dearer than Himself.

The prophet foretold this wounding of the Father through the heart of the Son, when he said, "They shall look on Me whom they have pierced, and shall mourn for Him" (Zech. xii. 10). Convinced of the love which we have outraged by our sin, we are forced into an attitude of penitence. Penitence is nothing else but love, convicted of having wronged the beloved. Nothing purges the soul of sin like penitence. No conviction of the abstract righteousness of the law, still less any pressure from fear of

the consequences of sin to our own souls, would have bred that passion for holiness which springs up naturally when the heart perceives what has been the mind of God towards it throughout. Thus the Cross of Christ reconciles men to God by making them abhor and abjure sin. There is no standing out against it. "The love of Christ constraineth us" (2 Cor. v. 14).

§ 11.

But the doctrine of the Atonement would lose all its meaning for us, if we were to suppose that Christ aimed at nothing else but turning men from sin for the future; or if we could believe that He aimed only at shewing that God still cared for us. The Atonement had also a retrospective side. It revealed the judgment of God upon past sin also. It was most necessary that the character of God should be cleared. The "silence" which God had kept (Ps. l. 21) in view of men's sins was mercifully designed. He "winked at the sins of men, because they should amend" (Wisd. xi. 23). A premature disclosure of all His burning indignation would have terrified men into despair, and would have frustrated the attempt to rid them of sin. But this reticence on the part of God was liable to be misunderstood. It might have been thought that, after all, God did not care much about men's sin; that He was easy, good-natured, indulgent; that on occasion, indeed, He used strong words against sin, but that His words were sterner than His deeds. To remove such a misconception

was, to say the least of it, as marked a feature of the Atonement as the demonstration of His love. "God," says S. Paul, "set forth Christ Jesus to be a propitiation, through faith, by His blood, to shew His righteousness, because of the passing over of the sins done aforetime in the forbearance of God,—for the shewing, I say, of His righteousness at this present season: that He might Himself be just, and the justifier of him that hath faith in Jesus" (Rom. iii. 25, 26). And, indeed, unless we bear this in mind, the Cross is no very cogent proof of love. It is only in proportion as we recognise the hatefulness of sin in God's eyes—His perfect loathing and detestation of having anything to do with it—that we see the magnitude of the sacrifice which He made for us, in not only bearing so long *with* it, but at last giving His Son to *bear* it. It was this identifying of His Son for our sakes with all that God most abominates, which shews the depth of His fatherliness: "He made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. v. 21).

§ 12.

So far we have considered the atoning work of Christ as a true exhibition of the mind of God towards sinful men, both in its stern and in its tender aspect, thus at the same moment wooing them and warning them back from sin to God. But our Redeemer is as truly man as He is God. He represents, therefore, with equal fidelity, the response of the human conscience to the revelation thus made.

He redeemed mankind by the perfectness with which He responded to it.

We may, perhaps, consider first the response as shewn in His life. It is a loss to the Church when the redemptive character of the life of Jesus upon earth is forgotten, and when His death alone is considered in that light. When this is the case, the three and thirty years of His sojourn come to be regarded as serving only to set an example to men, or as a time of teaching and preaching. If attention turns at all to His life in itself, apart from its didactic effect, the life wears the look of being only a necessary preliminary to dying, or at best of qualifying for a work of atonement at the close.

We do not mean to deny that such views of our Lord's life are true, but to assert that they are only partial. It is most important, for instance, to consider our Lord as the Example and Pattern whom we are to imitate. He revealed to men in His life the true ideal of manhood, as well as the true conception of God. The one revelation was as necessary as the other, for both had been equally obscured. Mankind, as S. Athanasius says, was made to be a picture of the Eternal Son; but the picture was become so blurred and begrimed, that it could not be restored without the appearance of Him whose portrait it was intended for. He shewed us by example what is the true relation of the creature to the Creator. He shewed us what sonship is, and in His conduct towards men He shewed us also what brotherhood is.

But His life was far more than an example for us.

As such, it would have daunted us at least as much as it would have stimulated, because Christ did not start with our disadvantages. Christ's life had a value on our behalf quite independent of its moral effect on us. It had a value on our behalf towards God. He lived, as He died, the true Representative Man. He displayed before the eyes of the Creator His own ideal for mankind perfectly realised. Once more there was something in mankind upon which the regard of God could rest with satisfaction. One generation of men after another had come and gone since the first Fall, and all had been sinful. Some men had been better than others, and offered points of hope; but all had proved faulty. It was a series of disappointments and failures. There was nothing which came up to the requirements of God, nothing which did not in some degree move the Holy One to displeasure and abomination. It seemed as if Satan's triumph over the race was complete and irreversible, and that all men must necessarily sin. But such an induction would have been hasty. It would have ignored a fundamental fact in the conception of humanity. The members must not be reckoned without the Head. Humanity without Christ is not humanity. It is, as an able writer has pointed out, the mistake of the Positivist Religion to think so, and to worship humanity to the exclusion of Christ. But if it is a mistake to exclude Christ and worship what remains of humanity, so is it a mistake, by the exclusion of Christ, to reckon humanity as lost. Even if we could consider Christ as a private individual

human being, yet, if He is really human, there is at least one sound spot in human nature. But Christ is not, and cannot be, a private, casual, human being. He occupies the unique position of the Second Adam, the necessary "Head of every man" (1 Cor. xi. 3). Therefore, until Christ be fallen, humanity is not wholly lost. Christ's perfect life offers a firm rallying-point for all that is human to gather round. In spite of the defection of many, God sees in Him what He desired to see; and as at the first bright beginning of human life in Eden, He could say that it was "very good" (Gen. i. 31), so, looking down again upon human life in Jesus, He could bear testimony, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (S. Matt. iii. 17).

§ 13.

The Second Adam, no less than the first, had to pass through His probation. That probation of the Incarnate Son is by no means easy to understand. Any firm grasp of the facts of the case makes it clear, to begin with, that Christ could not sin. To suppose Him peccable, however sinless, or fallible, however free from actual error, betrays a Nestorian conception of His Person; it shews that He is thought of as possessed of a double personality—a Divine Being lodged in a man.

Christ is a single Person, and that Person is a Divine Person. In that accommodation of Himself to human limitations which S. Paul speaks of as "emptying Himself" (Phil. ii. 7), He by no means

emptied Himself of His essential holiness; He only caused that holiness, like His love, of which it is a part, to manifest itself under new conditions. But the conditions under which this indefeasible holiness was manifested were those of a real and a progressive human nature. The Divinity of His Person did not lift Him up out of the reach of natural human wants and impulses. Quite the contrary. Amongst ourselves, an intellectual man is sometimes so absorbed in his intellectual pursuits as to become oblivious of lower necessities. But with Christ this was not—at least not usually—the case. He was never "absent." It was part of His perfection to be keenly alive to everything. When we read that on a certain occasion Jesus "troubled Himself" (S. John xi. 33), voluntarily breaking up the serenity that was natural to Him, in order to enter with conscious completeness into the woe with which He was surrounded, we have an illustration of what was habitual to Him. His very Divinity made it possible for Him more fully than for others to *taste* the ingredients of human life. And although, by His freedom from original sin, He had none of the vicious and depraved desires which are congenital to us, and could only think of such with an instinctive abhorrence, yet, being human, He could not fail to be tempted by the same things which had tempted our first parents. Bodily pains and pleasures found in Him the most exquisitely sensitive nerves to which they had ever appealed. He had a human intellect and imagination, of which Aristotle, Alexander, Dante, Raffaelle, Beethoven, afford feeble and stunted types;

and it cannot have been easy to forgo the prospects opened out by the possession of such powers. His human spirit met its peculiar trial, in the very closeness of its association with the Divine nature.

Although, therefore, He could not fall, He could be tempted. There was no risk of His choosing wrong, but He felt the hardship of choosing right. His human nature could not be torn away from the Divine—that is, from Himself; but it could be racked by the strain of keeping up with it. The very fact that His human nature was healthy, and could only be inclined to things good in their kind, made it all the harder to sacrifice them to a higher purpose. We may truly say that our Lord not only could be tempted, but that He had a greater susceptibility to temptation than any other human being. And at the same time, the crafts and assaults of the Tempter were more artfully and more persistently concentrated upon Him than upon any other. It is a mistake to suppose that He was only tempted during the forty days in the wilderness. Those forty days were a fierce and typical outbreak of new temptations such as He had been incapable of before His Baptism; but we are significantly told that, at the close of them, the devil departed from Him "for a season" (S. Luke iv. 13). It was a short lull, and the storm was but gathering strength to burst upon Him again.

And as the temptation was true human temptation, so was the victory true human victory. It was not, indeed, the victory of a man overcoming by sheer force of human will without the assistance of Divine

grace; but neither was it the victory of a God, overcoming by His Divine force and silencing and ignoring His human feelings. It was the victory of One who had thrown His whole self into human conditions, and fought with no weapons but those which are common to men, such as prayer and fasting and vigilance. Christ's life was a life of faith, like that of His brethren (Heb. ii. 13). If His spotless character was appealed to by those who wished to emulate it, He taught them the secret of its spotlessness by pointing them to the source from which they, as well as He, might derive holiness. "Why callest thou Me good? there is none good save One, that is, God" (S. Mark x. 18). It was not, we may believe, by drawing upon a reserve of superhuman powers of His own that Christ resisted temptation while on earth, but by a humble and creaturely dependence upon God. That position of dependence He could not have abandoned without ceasing to be *Himself*, which was impossible; but His human faculties freely chose the position.

When the Church teaches that Christ was impeccable, she teaches no arbitrary dogma. The inability to sin was not a mechanical inability, the result of inherent apathy towards the objects of temptation; still less was it the result of any system of special protections. The fulness of Christ's humanity presented an almost infinite frontier to assault; and there was no spot at which the assault was not attempted. "He was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. iv. 15).

§ 14.

But to say that Christ was sinless—"as a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Pet. i. 19)—is but one side, the negative side, of His redeeming life. It represents a larger and more positive notion to speak of His life as perfect. It was not only unsullied by sins of commission, but its splendour was undiminished by any sin of omission. Nothing was lacking to it. Not that it was a perfection stereotyped from the first, and unchangeable. It was a perfection that increased and developed from year to year. Conceived without sin as He was, the initial fashioning of His human nature was a perfect fashioning. He became a perfect Infant, a perfect Boy, a perfect young Man. He would not have been so, had He possessed at three years old, or at thirteen, the mature powers of the man of thirty; for a perfect childhood must mean a perfect compliance with all the conditions of childhood. Gradually the holiness which was never absent from Him was absorbed by His human nature, and made more and more consciously its own. The will of the Father, which in infancy had been instinctively, though perfectly, obeyed, became, as He grew older, the freely chosen rule of His life. He not only yielded to it when made known to Him; in His own pregnant phrase, He "sought" it. "I seek not Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me" (S. John v. 30). He thus "learned obedience" (Heb. v. 8), not because He was ever in any degree disobedient, but because obedience is not fully obedience so long as it is simply

a compliance with an external command, but only when it can enter intelligently into the whole counsel of him who commands. When, therefore, the life of Christ is said to be a perfect life, it involves an appalling range of intelligent obedience. The humbler the position is, the more easy it is to be perfect. As men rise in the scale, the relations of life become more complicated, and responsibilities more difficult to meet. And Christ's life was beyond all comparison the most complicated in its relations and responsibilities of all that have ever been lived. It was a simple thing to be a good little child, a simple thing to be a good young man at the carpenter's bench in Nazareth; but no man,—no emperor with all his political and social power for good or ill, no pontiff with "the care of all the Churches" weighing upon him,—has such a delicate and difficult task to acquit himself of as that of Jesus. He had all mankind, all history, to think of; and the welfare of every individual human being depended upon each act, word, and thought of His. He was not called upon to live the life of a perfect man of one restricted type, but the life of a perfect Head of the Race. And He did it perfectly. The exacting eye of God Himself could find nothing left to desire. At no moment in all that life could a single detail have been altered, except for the worse.

§ 15.

There is one point in our Lord's life of obedience on which it is necessary to enlarge somewhat more. His position was not that of a Head of the Race in the

normal condition of the race. The difficulty of the position was aggravated beyond our power of thought by the disordered state of things into which Christ came. The first Adam had been tempted, but he had not been tempted through suffering. Obedience would have cost him nothing but self-restraint. Everything was made easy for him. But for the Second Adam everything was made hard. He "learned obedience by the things which He suffered" (Heb. v. 8). He was called upon, not only, like the first man, to hold back from an abuse of endowments, but to endure every variety of pain and penalty for His adhesion to the Father's will. The guiltless heir to the throne of David was born an outcast in a stable. In early infancy, a plot against His life drove Him hastily into exile. In youth, He laboured at a trade, amidst the privations of a poor and bereaved home. Then, when He came into public life, after the fasting and afflictions of the wilderness, He became "acquainted with grief" (Isa. liii. 3), in every shape which it assumes. Besides the homeless state, which His own words shew that He felt acutely—"The Son of Man hath not where to lay His head" (S. Matt. viii. 20)—the subsistence on the uncertain charity of others, the bodily hunger and thirst and weariness, the heat and cold, the loss of friends by death, He had the deeper sorrows of failure and rejection, of involving others in His own calamities, of misunderstanding and contempt in His own family, of furious hatred and cruel and wilful misinterpretation from the representatives of religious authority, of fickle and insincere attachment

on the part of multitudes whom He had benefited in soul and body, of desertion by every one of His followers, of being sold by one and denied with oaths and curses by another, and at last, as it seemed, of being disowned and forsaken by God Himself. It was not only through innocence, it was not only through obedience that Christ redeemed us; it was through obedience tested and perfected by sufferings so manifold in their character, so ingenious in their combination, and so overwhelming in volume, that no imagination short of His could comprehend them. And the glory of the obedience lies in this—that Jesus, so far from flinching from doing the will of God at such a cost, found joy and happiness and contentment in doing it. "Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of Me) to do Thy will, O My God: I am content to do it, yea, Thy law is within My heart" (Ps. xl. 7, 8). "If ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love; even as I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love. These things have I spoken unto you, that My joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full" (S. John xv. 10, 11).

§ 16.

The obedience of our Lord's life was crowned by the obedience of His death. "Being found in fashion as a Man, He humbled Himself and became obedient, even to the extent of death, yea, the death of the Cross" (Phil. ii. 8). In one sense it was the most fitting, in another sense the most unfitting end to

such a career. Man, we are given to believe, had not always been intended to die, like the lower animals. Though his terrestrial life was not designed to be infinitely prolonged, it was designed to lead up to a splendid departure.

Such a splendid departure was actually, at one moment, as it seems, within the reach of Jesus. The Transfiguration was, we can hardly doubt, the beginning of that glorious passing away into other conditions, which was the appropriate close of our Lord's perfect human development. So far as His own personal probation was concerned, all had by that time been accomplished, and nothing remained but to take the reward. Two saints of the Old Testament, who had themselves passed away by other than the ordinary gates of death, were seen appearing, to welcome Him as "that which was mortal" in Him began to be "swallowed up of life," and He drew near to be "clothed upon with His habitation from heaven" (2 Cor. v. 2, 4). But those who heard the colloquy between our Lord and them, heard them, "in glory" themselves, speak of a different kind of "exit (ἔξοδον) which He should accomplish at Jerusalem" (S. Luke ix. 31). He tore Himself back from the open door, to mix a while longer with a "faithless and perverse generation," bidding His disciples to say nothing about it, till He should be "risen from the dead." It was part of His duty, as the sinless Head of the sinful Race, to go on as He had begun. He had not demanded exemption from the lesser sufferings which His brethren had brought upon themselves; nor would

He demand, nor accept, exemption from the greatest He had received such a commandment from His Father—to lay His life down, and to take it again (S. John x. 18); and He did not hesitate to do it. He did not die because He must, but because He chose.

It was this free renunciation of His right to a triumphal end, prompted by love to men and obedience to the Father, which gave its atoning value to His death. "It was not His death which was well pleasing," says S. Bernard in famous words, "but the will by which He chose to die." His death may not be isolated from His previous life. It was a supreme and concentrated exhibition of that which had all along characterized Him—joyful and perfect creaturely obedience under the test of the severest suffering. The Apostle regards the whole life of Jesus, culminating in His death, as a single and undivided act of righteousness, all of one piece, and far outbalancing by its absolute conformity to the Divine will Adam's fatal error. "As through one trespass the judgment came unto all men to condemnation, even so through one act of righteousness (δικαίωμα) the free gift came unto all men to justification of life: for as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One shall the many be made righteous" (Rom. v. 18, 19).

§ 17.

Men often wonder why Jesus shrank from death with such horror and repugnance. While a Socrates and a Seneca can move towards death with calm

composure, Jesus is seen to be "sore amazed and overwhelmed with anguish (ἐκθαμβεῖσθαι καὶ ἀδημονεῖν)." "My soul," He says, "is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death" (S. Mark xiv. 33, 34). It is as though He had never fully felt till that moment what death would be, although He had long lived in contemplation of it; and now it almost kills Him even to anticipate it. Why was it so?

A striking phrase in the Epistle to the Hebrews seems to touch the point. Jesus was made "by the grace of God on behalf of every man to *taste* death" (Heb. ii. 9). It has been nobly shewn by a modern writer that Jesus alone of all men has truly *tasted* death. Some men are naturally stolid and apathetic: they lack the imagination requisite for tasting death. Some purposely refuse to contemplate what would unman them, and steadily string their nerves to endure it, whatever it may be. To Christians, the bitterness of death is gone, just because Christ died and rose again; and they can hardly be said to die at all, but to pass from a less desirable scene of life to a more desirable. But when Christ, in His human spirit and soul and body, confronted death, no one before Him had passed through death victoriously. Its terrors were as yet undiminished; and Jesus knew that it lay with Him to put an end to them by exhausting them. He was not secured against those terrors by any indifference, either natural or assumed. He refused the stupefying draught, which was offered Him. He resolutely set all His human faculties to sound to the depths the dreadfulness of dying. So

far from casting Himself upon His Divine impassibility, He lent, we may say, His Divine nature to extend His human consciousness into an infinity of suffering. Not a circumstance was allowed to be wanting which could aggravate the inherent horribleness of death.

Perhaps the world might have been redeemed, had He died for it in Seneca's comfortable bath, or by Socrates' narcotic poison; but S. Paul adds it as a grave factor in Christ's obedience, that He was not only obedient even unto death, but that that death was "the death of the Cross" (Phil. ii. 8). What the Romans, who inflicted it, thought of crucifixion is well known. *Servitutis extremum summumque supplicium* is what Cicero calls it; and he declares that the Latin language contains no word strong enough to describe the crime of inflicting such a punishment upon a Roman citizen, however bad he might be. But to the Jew, who looked upon everything in a religious light, it was far worse. A peculiar sense of malediction had, in a half superstitious manner, gathered about punishments of this kind, owing, or partly owing, to the variously interpreted words of the Law, "He that is hanged is the curse of God" (Deut. xxi. 23). Any other form of execution, even stoning itself, seemed kindly, when compared with this hoisting up of the naked and pierced body between earth and heaven, as if rejected and abhorred by both. And no element in all this complication of horrors passed untasted by Jesus. The bodily tortures, the indignities and shame, the sense of failure,

the fear, the hatred with which His love was requited, —all this, and much more, was felt by Him with a sensitiveness which has had no parallel, and which was able both to analyse it into its constituent parts, and to weigh it altogether in its solid completeness. He drained the cup until He had sucked out the very dregs.

§ 18.

The physical and imaginative terrors of death, though acutely felt by our Lord, were a small part of His sufferings in dying. Its connexion with sin is the "sting" of death (1 Cor. xv. 56). Human death is, as we have said, an unnatural thing. For Christ to bear the earlier pains of His life was a great condescension, because pain follows normally upon transgression of the laws of the universe, not upon perfect conformity to them. Being in a disordered world, however, it was impossible that He should escape some pains. But that, after He had cheerfully borne all else, He should yield up His life itself as a forfeited thing, seems almost more than could have been expected. Christ, by His perfections, had fully established His right to live; and God called upon Him to die. It was tantamount to demanding of Him a confession of sin. Perhaps this is the light in which it is easiest for the devout mind to lay hold upon the Atonement made by Christ.

If we try to imagine, apart from revelation, what would be the necessary elements in an act of reparation for past wrong-doing, we can hardly think of

anything else besides an adequately contrite acknowledgment of it, coupled with a perfect and effectual resolve to do the very opposite from thenceforth. Merely to cease from wrong-doing in the future, while saying nothing about the past, would clearly be insufficient. But it would as clearly be insufficient, if, even along with the cessation of the offence, an external punishment for the past were inflicted. A truly righteous being like God could never be satisfied with exacting penalties which left the mind of the offender unaltered. He must needs require that the offender should come to look upon his offence with the same eyes as Himself. The sinner must be brought to regard the sin in its true light, and to measure it with the true measurement. This once fully done, it is difficult to see what more is wanting to a satisfactory reparation.

This is just what the sinner is unable by himself to do. He cannot fully confess or feel his sin. The sin itself impedes him. His eyes are blinded by it, and his conscience benumbed. He has lost the ideal of holiness, and therefore cannot appreciate the contrast between the ideal and the actual. None but a perfectly healthy and pure conscience can adequately take in the heinousness of sin, or adequately give expression to it. But Christ could do this. Having no sin of His own to dull His perceptions, He could feel to the full the demands of a holy law, and acknowledge their unalterable justice; and therefore He could gauge the extent to which His brethren had fallen short. He would be able to give an absolute

and unwavering consent to that wrath of God which went out against sin—not deprecating it, not begging that it might be appeased with anything less than justice, not minimising the sin against which it went out, effecting no kind of composition with it, but going the whole length with it, and sympathizing with its entire reach and range of indignation and fury.

This is involved in describing Jesus as a "faithful" High Priest (Heb. ii. 17; iii. 2), a "righteous" Advocate (1 John ii. 1). Such a complete and exhaustive concurrence in the Father's judgment upon sin is even spoken of as sustaining our Saviour through the anguish of His task. He was taking, not only giving, revenge for the outrage done by sin. "The day of vengeance is in My heart, and the year of My redeemed is come. And I looked, and there was none to help"—not one who was able to take the same view of sin as He took—"and I wondered that there was none to uphold; therefore Mine own arm brought salvation unto Me; and My fury, it upheld Me" (Isa. lxiii. 4, 5). But it was not the fury of one who assented to the chastisement of some guilty third person. The wrath of which He so deeply felt the justice blazed forth upon Himself. It was this which gave it so terrible a power. On Him was laid "the iniquity of us all" (Isa. liii. 6). He felt Himself to be identified with His brethren for weal and for woe. Though it was no fault of His that they had sinned, He was in a manner held responsible for them. Their shame was His shame, their guilt His guilt. Standing to them in the relation in which He stood, He

could not disown them; and He would not if He could. He loved them too well for that. He had espoused their cause because He loved them, and therefore He must suffer with them and for them And if His work was to be well and lastingly done, so as to need no repetition and no supplementing, He must, once for all, taste the whole bitterness of sin, even of the sin of all mankind. He must, as representing the conscience of the race, feel a loving, filial submissive sorrow for sin, which should not only be sincere and good as far as it went, but which should cover the whole field which had to be covered. It was His lot to realise to the utmost item in His own Person all that each individual conscience ought to realise when it is piercingly awakened to the righteous claims of God on the one side, and to the base selfishness with which it has met them on the other. And if such an awakening is bitter to the guilty conscience, how much more to the sinless! Often a pure-hearted mother will feel the disgrace and wickedness of her son more profoundly than the son himself does even in his most contrite moments. In something of the same way,—though mother and son are not to each other what Christ is to those whom He died to save,—Christ, we may believe, felt the torture more deeply than the whole world of penitents could feel it, when the iniquity of all men was borne in upon His pure human conscience—not indeed as His own, as if He had personally committed it,—but as more than His own, because it was the iniquity of those whom He so loved, and with whom His love

so identified Him. There is a kind of selfishness in penitence for sins which we have committed with our own hands, but none in such a penitence as this, where love for the offender and love for the Offended, in all their combined force, were converted into an agonized sense of the offence.

And this was not to be done by an act of contemplation only. All through life Christ had been made to bear the loathsome pressure of other men's sins encompassing Him. But during all that time He stood in some measure aloof from them; they were kept, so to speak, at arm's length, and regarded as external to Himself,—the sins of others. It was His death which made the union with men complete. In His death, those sins, from which every fibre of His being revolted with indignation and dismay, were brought home to His inmost conscience, in the realisation that He and we are one. It was not for Him to plead calmly and condescendingly for us from His superior height of conscious integrity, but to appropriate us and all our vileness, in order to deal with it as it deserved within the very sphere of His own holy being. The last barrier between His Person and ours was borne down in death, and let in upon His soul the whole flood of our transgression, to be expiated and purged and done away by the satisfactory thoroughness with which Christ's broken heart admitted it, grieved over it, and repudiated it. In such a death, voluntarily accepted, Christ made the faithful response of the human conscience in view of the broken law of God.

§ 19.

That Christ's death was in a true sense penal, is clearly conveyed to us in Holy Scripture, though it has been denied by pious and tender souls of our own time. "The chastisement of our peace was upon Him" (Isa. liii. 5). But when it is asked what the penalty was, the answer must be sought in some such considerations as the foregoing, not in anything more outward and adventitious. It was the death itself which formed the penalty—only death realised and tasted. Christ did not bear our sins in addition to dying, or die in addition to bearing our sins. His death—Christ being what He was, and feeling it as He did—was itself the bearing of our sins. Thus the naturalness and simplicity of the Atonement are preserved.

But there was one feature in Christ's Passion which deserves a separate mention, because it wears most clearly the penal aspect, although strictly it was an integral part of His "tasting death." The sins which He bore were so completely laid on Him, as to produce upon His personal consciousness the sense of being Himself cut off from God. "My God, my God," He cried, in the words of the Psalm, "why didst Thou forsake Me?" It was the hour in which the Son's "self-emptying," spoken of by S. Paul as begun in the Incarnation (Phil. ii. 7), was consummated. *Non solvit unionem*, says S. Leo, *sed subtraxit visionem.* The Divine fellowship between the Father and the Son was not annulled, but for the time, it was not

actively enjoyed. It was Christ's own will and the Father's that it should be so. His Godhead seemed to retreat and withdraw itself into His manhood, so that there might be no alleviation to the anguish which the manhood felt, and which the Godhead alone enabled it fully to feel. It was made to bear the weight in absolute isolation. No human sympathy reached it from below the Cross, and no Divine sympathy from above. That heart which was distended, even to bursting, with entire love to both, had to endure the sense of estrangement from both, as if all sin were concentrated in His own Person, and were abhorred and disowned by God and man alike. And the sense of estrangement from God is the greatest pain that can be conceived of. Even to feel the active exercise of His wrath, as when it says, "Upon the ungodly He shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, storm and tempest; this shall be their portion to drink" (Ps. xi. 6)—this would be a lesser thing to bear, especially to a holy soul, than the freezing sense of a calm, deliberate, inexorable abandonment. Indignant punishment is a sign of love that is pained; but forsaking shews only aversion and dislike. The transport of anger might spend itself and subside; but there is a hopelessness about God's judicial dereliction of the soul which gives it the appearance of being eternal and irreversible. If S. Paul's description of the penalty of the lost is exact, "eternal perishing from the face of the Lord" (2 Thess. i. 9), then it seems as if our Blessed Lord had even tasted something not unlike it upon the

Cross. It was not, of course, the case that the Father had rejected Him, or was personally wroth with Jesus; nor did He feign to do so; but *man* was under condemnation, and must be made to realise what really the condemnation was; and Jesus was man, and could alone realise for us the extent, and the righteousness, of the condemnation. So it was brought home to Him in dying that He was perfectly identified with us. Our sins rolled like an ocean between Him and God, and out of the deep of it He cried, "My God, My God, why didst Thou forsake Me?"

§ 20.

It will be seen that, on this view of the Atonement, there is no need to resort to the language of substitution, which has so often alienated thoughtful minds. That language is neither scriptural nor ancient, and therefore has no special claim upon the adhesion of the Christian conscience. Indeed, it seems to be studiedly excluded from the New Testament. There is but a single saying of our Lord's which appears to teach it, where He says, "The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His soul a ransom instead of many" (S. Matt. xx. 28; S. Mark x. 45). But the preposition which is here used, and only here (*ἀντί*), belongs to the notion of "ransom." It cannot now be doubted that the notion of "ransom" in this connexion is metaphorical, and must not be pressed into a dogma. To accept it literally would involve us in the question whether the ransom was paid to God or (according to some

early exponents) to the devil. If we adopted the former alternative, it would involve us in the further question—what ransom Christ paid instead of us, so that we need not pay it. Not bodily death, for we all die; not eternal damnation, for (if it is not blasphemous even to deny such a thought) Christ was not eternally damned. But as a fact, the very idea of ransom is not strongly felt in the metaphor. In the New Testament itself, Moses is spoken of as sent to be "a ransomer" (Acts vii. 35) of the Israelites. The word is the same; but no one would maintain that anything was paid by Moses for the deliverance of the people. Therefore it would not be true to say that the statement, "Christ gave His soul a ransom instead of many," is the same as "Christ died instead of many." The preposition is a part of the metaphor. And as if to take away any occasion of misunderstanding, S. Paul, when citing our Lord's expression, alters the form of it: "Who gave Himself a ransom on behalf of all (*ἀντίλυτρον ὑπὲρ πάντων*)" (1 Tim. ii. 6). He exchanges the unusual preposition, which would denote a substitution, for the usual one, which denotes simply an action in another's cause.

So far, therefore, as the language of the New Testament goes, there is no reason for supposing our Lord to have been substituted for us in His Passion. But the objection to a theory of atonement by substitution lies deeper than the meaning of a preposition. If the one object of the Divine justice had been to inflict a condign punishment, perhaps the theory might have been more tolerable. But we have seen

that such was not the case, and that an equivalent penalty could not satisfy God, instead of the removal of the sin. Even had it been otherwise, however, it runs counter to all our best conceptions of justice that penalties should be inflicted in that fashion. We can understand a just penalty being remitted to the offender at the intercession of a powerful friend. We can understand such a friend undertaking any pains and dangers, any obloquy and humiliation, the loss of his property, the loss of life itself, in promoting the cause which he has espoused. The greater his self-sacrifice, the more powerful will his intercession be. The whole world, both of nature and of men, teems with sufferings which are in that sense vicarious, as borne by one for the sake of another. They constantly move our compassion and our admiration. There is nothing contrary to our feelings, if such self-sacrifices, perhaps of a wife or of a father, are taken into account, and the penalty of the offender is mitigated in consequence; especially if there are signs that the offender himself is moved to amendment by the love displayed on his behalf. But that a legal tribunal, professing to act on principles of strict justice, and to visit specified offences with fixed penalties, should accept the offer of an innocent party to undergo the penalty in the stead of the guilty, would be totally impossible.

But, indeed, such vicarious sufferings as we have spoken of point us, not to the thought of a legalised substitution, but to that of something far deeper. They serve as types of the Atonement made by

Christ just because they shew the union, the solidarity, existing throughout the world, and (in all the more marked examples) because they shew love as the great bond of union. There is no bare substitution; there is vital connexion, free and sympathetic identification. Such is the position of our Redeemer in the world. He cannot be substituted for man; He *is* Man. One thing cannot be put in the stead of another unless it distinctly is another. But our Lord is not another. He has made Himself one with us. He has gathered us up into Himself. His love binds each one of us to Him so closely that He does not feel Himself to be apart from us. The difference of person, indeed, remains, or there would be no reciprocity of love; but He is "consubstantial with us," even as He is with the Father. In the completeness of the union which His mercy has effected with us, all that is ours has become His—our sin included; and all that is His has become ours—even that righteousness which swallowed up and expiated our sin. On our behalf He suffered, but not in our stead; and He undertook for us that we too should suffer, that we should share His mind about sin, and should abhor ourselves for it, and die to it, as He died. He made Himself "a Surety" (Heb. vii. 22) for us, laying down His own life as a pledge that we, by faith, should one day become like Him.

§ 21.

This consideration of the Saviour's Person gives a majestic unity and consistency to the whole doctrine

of the Atonement, and makes it appear, not a strained and artificial transaction, but natural and simple, and in harmony with what we know and with what we feel. It is just in itself, and becoming to God. The Divine purpose is not allowed to be thwarted; the very obstacles placed in its way are made the trophies of its power. Evil is not overborne by violence; there is so much of truth in the old notion of the devil being fairly treated; it is conquered by moral means, by love entering unarmed upon the combat, and inspiring the sinful race with a new determination to be holy. Though God is the author of the Atonement, and without Him fallen humanity would have been unable to offer it, yet it was made by Man, acting in the true conditions of man's nature. Full reparation is made for all that has been done wrong, and security is given for the ultimate extirpation of the sinful principles.

And yet, however we may labour to set forth in human words the nature and character of the Atonement, it is certain that no complete account of it can be given. It is too far-reaching for our understanding. We are, no doubt, intended to inquire about it, to dispel false notions about it, to bring together facts which throw light upon it. But there is a danger in doing so, lest men should rest in a theory of redemption rather than on the fact itself. We are not saved by what we think about the Cross of Christ, but by the Cross itself. It is of great importance that we should adoringly ask of our Lord the meaning of His Passion; but those who understand least of it as a

system of philosophy are often those who best know its power by experience. Calvary is not in the first instance a school for theologians, but a refuge for penitents; and S. Paul tells us that he deliberately refused, at least on one scene of his labours, to set forth the Atonement as a doctrine, lest it should lose force as a historical action. "Christ sent me to preach the Gospel," he says; and he adds, "not in wisdom of words, that the Cross of Christ should not be *emptied*" (1 Cor. i. 17).

Chapter VII.

The Risen Lord and the Gift of the Spirit.

Effects of Death upon Christ's Spirit and Body—His Resurrection and Ascension—New Work of the Risen Lord, in Intercession, and in the gift of the Spirit—Person and Procession of the Holy Ghost—His relation to the Human Nature of our Lord—Characteristic Function of the Spirit in the World—Difference between His Work before the Incarnation and since—Birth and Illumination of the Church—The Church Christ's Visible Embodiment—The Communion of Saints.

§ 1.

Our Lord's death was a real and complete death: He "became dead" (Rev. i. 18), and remained so, according to Jewish modes of counting, for three days. During that time, He did not return to heaven and His Father (S. John xx. 17). He condescended to endure all the limitations which are essential to the state of death. The Apostles' Creed, in its latest form, follows out that thought in its twofold consequences, for body and for soul. He was "dead, and buried: He descended into hell." It is commonly said that our Lord's Divinity was not withdrawn from either part of His human constitution. This may be implied by the way in which both the Creed and the Scriptures still identify each of the separated parts with Himself.

His body is still in a sense He, and so is His spirit. "There laid they Jesus" (S. John xix. 42), is as true a statement as that "neither was He left in Hades" (Acts ii. 31). If we do not believe that He was in this way really and truly dead, we lose the significance of His Resurrection.

But death did not benumb and paralyse His spiritual faculties. On the contrary, by it He was "quickened in spirit" (1 Pet. iii. 18), so as to be able to perform a work of mercy and power. Stripped of the bodily integument, but still invested with His human spirit, "He went and preached to the spirits in prison" (1 Pet. iii. 19). Not only did He vouchsafe the blessing of His company to the faithful dead in Paradise (S. Luke xxiii. 43), but, according to S. Peter, He penetrated—assuredly not Himself to suffer there any more—into the place or state where some at least were confined who had died an apparently impenitent death by the visitation of God. What was the exact purport and effect of His activity among them we are not told, but only that He preached to them, a "gospel" (1 Pet. iv. 6). The power of His Passion was already being felt in the unseen world, even before His Resurrection.

And in like manner His dead body, in the world of sense, gave signs of what was to come. The wound which was inflicted by the soldier's spear, was only given because the body was "dead already;" and if it had not been dead, the wound would have caused death. But, as Professor Westcott has pointed out, the "blood and water" which issued from the wound

were not a sign of death. Blood does not readily flow from an ordinary corpse. The separation of the blood and the water, or *serum*, which takes place in such a rupture of the heart as our Lord is thought by some to have died of, would be the beginning of decomposition and corruption; and the sinless flesh of Jesus, though subject to death, was not to be subject to corruption (Acts ii. 31). We ought, therefore, rather to see, in the outpouring of the blood and water, a sign that the dead body of Christ was being prepared for the coming Resurrection. And more than this. What the soldiers did, and what they did not do, were alike full of symbolical import. Unconscious of the significance of their own action, they were providentially guided to a double fulfilment of prophecy, and set forth mystically the method which redemption was about to follow. The unviolated frame, which had been typified by the Paschal Lamb, of which not a bone was to be broken, taught the undivided unity of the Church which was to be: and the pierced side, with its twofold out-flow, expressed the communication of her Bridegroom's life to that Church,—the blood a true fountain for her sin, and the water for her uncleanness,—which gifts were to be conveyed to her until the end of the age in the two Gospel Sacraments (S. John xix. 32–37; with Ex. xii. 46; Zech. xii. 10; xiii. 1).

§ 2.

It does not enter into our present scope to examine the historical evidence for the fact of our Lord's resurrection, but to show its doctrinal significance.

The importance of the fact is so great, that the whole structure of the Church, and the whole hope and belief of Christians, rests upon it. "If Christ hath not been raised," says S. Paul, "then is our preaching vain, your faith also is vain" (1 Cor. xv. 14). He goes on to speak of the whole Apostolic message as a grave misrepresentation of the character of God, if it should be found that the Resurrection never took place. It is therefore of much consequence that the nature of the resurrection of Christ should be rightly apprehended.

The Church cannot be satisfied with the theory which, under various forms, has of late years appeared to some minds a sufficient account of the matter,—namely, that the personality of Jesus had so wrought upon His disciples, that after His death they could not resist the impression that He was spiritually alive and near them, and that they saw visions of Him,—whether as the natural result of their exalted state of feeling with regard to Him, or by the special interposition of God. It is enough to say that the evidence which we have is not of such a character. What the disciples experienced was not a subjective impression, however spiritually correct,—except in the same sense as all our physical perceptions are subjective. They saw, not a ghost, but a body, which they handled, and felt it to be built up of flesh and bones,—which uttered words,—which assimilated the food they offered to it,—which at frequent intervals during six weeks presented itself to them, when assembled, as well as to single persons, and remained with them in

conferences of long duration. The resurrection of our Lord brought Him back into a living relation with material and palpable things.

But on the other hand it would be as gross a depravation—to say the least of it—of the Gospel teaching, to suppose that our Lord's resurrection was a return to the natural and earthly conditions to which He was before subject. The nature of the "spiritual body" is a matter which we shall have to consider hereafter. Suffice it to say here, that the resurrection of our Lord was not merely a proof of His continued existence, nor merely a proof of His being indeed the Son of God, nor merely a proof of the success and acceptance of His atoning death, but it was a revelation, and a most unexpected revelation, of the nature of the new life. It was clearly seen that the new life is not a simple continuation of this,—like the life to which Lazarus or the child of Jairus returned,—but something far higher.

Nor was the resurrection of our Lord only an exhibition for our benefit. By it Jesus Christ Himself went through a distinct change in the mode of His human existence. It would not have been a true revelation to us, if this were not the case; it would have been only a feint, like the Docetist notion of the Incarnation. Our Lord's own Person reached a further point by it; and He gained through death that spiritual condition into which He had looked at His Transfiguration.

But even in rising again from the dead, our Lord had not attained the full reward of His life's work and

His death's merit. For our sakes He allowed Himself to be for forty days detained on His heavenward way, —in an exalted state indeed,—possibly in one of gradually advancing glory—but not in that of His final exaltation. The Ascension was needed to complete what the Resurrection began. By it He passed, not only into a spiritual, but into a glorified condition. It was the great resumption of everything which in His "self-emptying" He had laid aside. He entered once more upon the full enjoyment of all His Divine glories and prerogatives. Every humiliating restriction and limitation was for ever at an end. In the figurative language of Scripture He once more "sat down on the right hand of God" (Heb. x. 12). He sat down Incarnate, not, as before the Incarnation, in His Divine nature alone: but He sat down enriched by the nature which He had assumed, not clogged and impoverished and weakened by it any more. The humanity which He wore was in no way annulled or dehumanised, though the conditions under which it acts are to our present faculties inconceivable. Every constituent of our nature is still there, and still truly human, only carried into the highest perfection of which it is capable, and answering with ease and readiness to every demand which is made upon it by that adored Person whose it is.

That perfection it will not leave when our Lord reappears upon the scene of this lower world in His Second Advent. The Second Advent will not, like the first, involve a change in the conditions of His personal life,—at least not in the direction of con-

descension. We expect Him to become visible again, not to the eye of faith only, but to that of unbelief also (Rev. i. 7); but He will be seen in glory, not in weakness any more. It will be by removing the veil from men's eyes, so that they may see Him as He is, not by His accommodating Himself to them again and appearing outside the veil.

§ 3.

It is the doctrine of our Lord that not until after His death and resurrection was He in a position to begin the actual regeneration of the world. "Except the corn of wheat fall into the ground and die," He said, "it abideth itself alone" (S. John xii. 24). Until that epoch, He was Himself only on the natural level, so far as His human nature was concerned. His death became the occasion of exercising a new power upon mankind. It was not only that by the Atonement made in His death He removed the obstacles which hindered God's grace from flowing freely out upon us. Nor was it only, on the other hand, that the pathetic story of His death touched the hearts of men, and made them susceptible to better influences. In other words, it was not His death, as death only, which made the difference to the world, but His death as the indispensable mode of entrance upon a new vantage-ground,—the gate to the Resurrection. If we are saved at the present time,—if the centuries since Christ's life on earth are of a loftier character than those before, it is due, not to the simple action upon us of a past event—even the greatest—in the

history of Christ; it is due to Christ Himself, in His continued and heightened activity, still living to apply to us the results of that event. It was this which made Him in an effectual sense the Second Adam, and rendered Him capable of imparting to other men a new life. By His death and resurrection He became, not what the first Adam was, "a living soul," but much more, "a quickening spirit" (1 Cor. xv. 45);—a Second Adam not only as once more recapitulating and representing the race, but as an actual father to it, reproducing His own life in it,—and that, not a life "of the ground, earthy," but "of heaven" (1 Cor. xv. 47).

There are two closely connected ways by which Christ after His glorification began a new work for mankind, the one inward, towards God; the other outward, towards the world. The first is the exercise of an immeasurably increased power of intercession. In the Epistle to the Hebrews we appear to be given to understand that so far from having accomplished and laid aside His priestly function with His death, our Lord was first truly consecrated to His priesthood on the morning of the Resurrection (Heb. v. 5, 6). The sacrificial task was not at an end when His life was laid down on Calvary,—which answered to the slaughter of the typical victims. The whole point of the sacrifice lies in the presentation of that life, enriched and consecrated to the utmost by having undergone death, and still and for ever living, in the inmost presence of God. This was expressed in the Jewish ritual by the sprinkling of the blood upon

the mercy seat (Heb. ix. 12, 24). Christ then has passed within the veil, to complete His merciful work for men, by pleading for them, not as in the weak life of earth, but "in heaven itself," appearing for them "in the presence of God,"—and by pleading for them in the irresistible power which His perfect discharge of His mission has given Him. What may be the nature and mode of His advocacy is beyond our power to conjecture; but we can feel it to be reasonable that the needs of the creation should in some such way find representation through Him who is its Firstborn, not only ideally, but by being the first to pass from the natural into the spiritual order, "the First-begotten from the dead" (Col. i. 18).

The second activity of the glorified Christ is a result of the first. The chief effect of His intercession on behalf of His disciples was to obtain for them the gift of the Holy Ghost. "I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Advocate, that He may be with you for ever" (S. John xiv. 16). Although in one sense that request was fully granted, once for all, ten days after our Lord's Ascension, in another sense our Lord is constantly making the same demand and receiving the same full reply. He is always engaged in sending the Holy Ghost to us from the Father. This was, it seems, a thing impossible before His exaltation. "If I depart not, the Advocate will not come unto you; but if I go My way, I will send Him unto you" (S. John xvi. 7). Christ had not yet won the Gift by His Passion. He was not yet in a position to demand it. But even if the Gift could have

been offered, men were not capable of receiving it, so long as they had Christ with them in the flesh. The natural presence and the spiritual presence were incompatible and mutually exclusive. It was necessary that the old state of things should be broken up, before the new and supernatural order could be begun.

§ 4.

That Holy Ghost, whom the Redeemer won for His brethren, is, as we have shown in an earlier chapter, truly and essentially God,—so entirely so, that God could not be conceived of as existing without Him. Though only manifesting Himself at an advanced date in human history, the Holy Ghost is no late development of Divine activity. His mission, indeed, like the mission of the Son, is of "the last days" (Heb. i. 2; Acts ii. 17); but He Himself, like the Son, is co-eternal and consubstantial with the Father. If creation had never existed, the Holy Ghost would have always existed, and must necessarily exist, in the fulness of the Divine Being.

He is the eternal product of the mutual love of the Father and the Son, the full expression of either to either, the bond which makes the two one. In this sense we believe that doctrine to be true, which is expressed in the *Filioque* clause of the Creed. A Catholic believer is free to confess that he cannot justify the way in which the clause was inserted by the Western Church, without the consent of the Eastern, into a Creed which was the joint heritage of all. He is bound also to acknowledge that as the

clause stands, it needs guarding and qualifying. Yet it would seem like receding from the truth, if the words which assert the Double Procession of the Spirit were now to be struck out from the Creed. Western theologians agree that the Spirit does not proceed from the Son as from a second fountain independent of the first. Eastern theologians agree that the Spirit does not issue out of the Father without coming through the Son. As the Son Himself is perfectly one with the Father, and owes all that He is and has to Him, the Spirit owes ultimately to the Father whatever belongs to Him as being the Spirit of the Son. It is therefore easy to hope that an agreement may be reached on this point, as soon as East and West are in a position to understand one another's language, without adopting the theory that the Holy Spirit owes only His temporal mission to Both, His eternal procession to the Father alone. Such a theory suffers a double disadvantage. The one passage of Holy Scripture which speaks of the "procession" at all (S. John xv. 26), appears certainly to mean by it the temporal mission; and it refers it only to the Father. Moreover, we must needs suppose that the respective actions of the Three blessed Persons in time are founded upon Their essential relations to each other in eternity; so that if the Son can be said now to send the Holy Ghost to us from the Father, it must be in view of some deep fact by which the person of the Holy Ghost is subordinated to the Son as well as to the Father.

All the language of the Bible concerning the Holy

Ghost shews that He is as truly a Person as either the Father or the Son,—One who wills (1 Cor. xii. 11), who searches (1 Cor. ii. 10), who intercedes (Rom. viii. 26), who is grieved (Eph. iv. 30), who, if that be the correct translation, longs yearningly for the souls in which He is lodged (S. James iv. 5). And yet, although His personality is so clearly marked, His unity with the Father and the Son is equally plain. His coming, His abiding presence, is the coming and the presence of Christ, and not of Christ only but of His Father also. "I will not leave you comfortless," says Christ, speaking of the mission of the Spirit, "I come to you;" and immediately after, He adds, "If a man love Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him" (S. John xiv. 18, 23).

§ 5.

The Father alone, as we have said, is the ultimate cause of the eternal being of the Holy Ghost; and the Father alone, ultimately, bestows Him upon men. But none the less, He is the gift of Christ, who has "received" Him from the Father for that purpose (Acts ii. 33). Indeed, as known to us, He is in a peculiar sense the Spirit of Christ, and not only the Spirit of God. There is a special connexion between Christ and Him. It is His great function to reveal Christ, who is in turn the revelation of the Father. The glories of the Father are not displayed to us as such; they become intelligible to us as the glories of the Son; and therefore the Father is glorified when

the Holy Spirit brings the riches of Christ before our hearts. "He shall glorify Me, for He shall take of that which is Mine, and shall declare it to you. All things that the Father hath are Mine; therefore said I that He taketh of that which is Mine and shall declare it to you" (S. John xvi. 14, 15). And when He makes known the glory of Christ, it is not only His glory as the Eternal Son of God, but as the Incarnate Son of Man. He interprets and applies Christ's historical work to its proper ends. He is the full Representative of Christ, in His human as well as in His Divine nature.

It would indeed be a rash innovation upon Catholic teaching to say that by the Incarnation of the Son some corresponding change took place in the mode of the Holy Ghost's existence, or to imply that to His Divine nature was added the nature of the human spirit. It has never been taught that in His own Person the Spirit of God has become humanised. But none the less, His sympathy with the Incarnation is so profound that He is able to express with perfect fidelity all the movements of sanctified human nature, as held by Jesus Christ. It was by His operation that the Word was made flesh. The whole early development of the Incarnate Life was under His control. At the Baptism of Jesus, He descended in a new manner upon Him, and possessed Him, and imparted to His human soul that consciousness of all Divine truth which was typified by the "opened heaven" (S. Matt. iii. 16). The dove-like form under which He was pleased to betoken His coming was

a sign that He was giving Himself, not as to others "by measure" (S. John iii. 34), dealing out particular gifts or graces, but in all His personal plenitude. The life of Christ became thus, we may say, an adequate historical embodiment of all the influences of the Holy Ghost; and the Holy Ghost became, not indeed confused with the human spirit of our Lord, but so entirely infused into it and so exclusively its animating principle, that thenceforth He bears for us titles which set forth the new relation into which He entered with humanity in Christ. Thus, for instance, when S. Paul says, "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying Abba, Father" (Gal. iv. 6), we shall not be far wrong if we suppose him to mean, not only that Spirit by which eternally the Son feels filially towards the Father, but that Spirit which marked Him in His Incarnate life. And so, after His Resurrection, our Blessed Lord at once began to impart to His disciples gifts of the Holy Ghost as being His own to give. He breathed upon them, from His human mouth, and said, "Receive ye holy Spirit" (S. John xx. 22). Ascending into heaven and receiving the consummation of His human nature, He, in His human nature, became able still more completely to absorb and assimilate the fulness of the Holy Ghost. Instead of being, as in the days of His flesh, under the direction of the Holy Ghost, the Holy Ghost came, if we may say so, to be under His. As man, He has made Him His own, and inspires Him into men. His humanity has become the medium for transmitting Deity to

creation. Whatever Christ does now in His Church, He does in His glorified humanity; and He does it through His imparted Spirit. And that imparted Spirit acts upon us as the agent of one who is still truly human: He is "the Spirit of Jesus" (Acts xvi. 7).

§ 6.

Since the beginning, it has been the work of the Holy Ghost to educe in creation the order, and the life, which belong eternally to the Word. We read that when the materials, out of which the world was to be formed, lay in undistinguished confusion, the first movement towards arrangement came from the hovering of the Spirit of God upon the face of the waters (Gen. i. 2). He is named by our Lord "the Finger of God" (S. Luke xi. 20). The name expresses both the ease and the delicacy with which He moulds and finishes off in detail the designs of God in the Word. We may attribute to His special care that beauty which is the most impressive evidence of the Divine hand in nature, and the faculty by which we appreciate that beauty. And what He does in the domain of nature, He does also in the domain of history. The working out of the Providence of God is His. It was He who prepared the way for the Incarnation. It is He who fashions the character and the destiny both of nations and of individual men in such a way as to conduce to the glory of Christ, who is the object and purpose of all. And He is also "the

Spirit of life" (Rom. viii. 2). By His own incorruptible presence in all things (Wisd. i. 7; xii. 1), He makes the universe to be not a dead, mechanical contrivance, but instinct with the life of the Word. Especially in the Christian Church, He is seen as the Quickener, both imparting the original spark of the Christian life, and afterwards renewing and reinvigorating it, for the Church as a whole, and for the Christians who compose it. The gifts of order and of life which He bestows are, when viewed in their higher aspects, akin to those of holiness and of liberty, which are His most characteristic gifts in the Church. It is His aim to reduce the seething chaos of human life to moral order and beauty, by drawing every man to share the holiness of Christ. He does this, not by imposing restrictions and laws, but by inspiring healthy affections. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty" (2 Cor. iii. 17). In view chiefly of this blessed work of renovation, of applying the redemptive work of Christ, of the inexhaustible energy with which He works His moral miracles, we call Him Creator:—*Veni Creator Spiritus.* This work of holy emancipation which He carries on, is effected through His inward "teaching" (*e.g.* S. John xiv. 26). As it is the power of conscious reflexion which makes the difference between the animals and man, so the heightening of consciousness, or rather the infusion of a new and Divine form of consciousness, by the Holy Ghost, produces sanctification. Such teaching, enlightenment, realisation of the truth, are everywhere spoken of as specially the work of

the Holy Spirit. Being the principle of consciousness and freedom in God, He becomes so, by impartition, to men.

§ 7.

When we come to express the difference between the operations of the Holy Ghost upon men before and after the glorification of Christ,—or, which is much the same thing, between His work upon Christians and upon those who are not Christians at the present day,—we find both the poverty of language, and also the difficulty of entering with any fulness of imagination into experiences different from our own. Could we ourselves consciously have passed, like the Apostles, from the earlier stage of His influence to the later, we might have been able better to point the contrast. To them, the coming and presence of the Holy Ghost was a new fact so marked, so perceptible, so insistent, that they could appeal to it without hesitation in testimony of their doctrine. "He, then, that supplieth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth He it by works of law" (Gal. iii. 5)? "Herein perceive we that He dwelleth in us, by the Spirit which He gave us" (1 John iii. 24).

We are bound to believe that all good desires and virtuous practice and true teaching among heathen people is the result of the "striving" of the Holy Ghost with their wills (Gen. vi. 3). Amongst the Chosen People under the Old Covenant, His agency was much more observable. The prophets were inspired by Him: He was in them "the Spirit of

Christ" (1 Pet. i. 11). However slowly the ethical ideas of the people at large were purified, individual saints were formed before Pentecost whose morality could hardly have been improved, had they lived in the later dispensation. Yet broadly speaking it is true that in those days, "there was no Holy Ghost (in the world), because that Jesus was not yet glorified" (S. John vii. 39). Since that event, He not only bestows His grace more abundantly on those who receive it, and extends it to a greater number of persons:—the very mode of His operation is changed, both in its outward presentment, and in its inward character.

The Holy Ghost is now manifested as forming and maintaining a corporate Society of elect men; and in this society He personally and permanently dwells. Whereas, before, He worked upon isolated beings, raising up single heroic witnesses to His power amidst the great mass of unsanctified humanity, He now works upon the world through the medium of a compact and united body of men, who not only respond to His motions when He calls them to advancing self-sanctification, but feel themselves responsible for the redemption of the whole world around them. Whereas, before, the persons who came under His influence, felt it as something external to themselves,—a breath which came upon them and went again, in sweeping and stormy gusts,—it is now felt, both by the Church and by the single Christian as an internal fact, quiet and settled,—sometimes more felt, indeed, and sometimes less, yet always there, and always to be relied

upon. He gives, now, not a grace only, but His own personal self, to make both the whole Church and each full member of it a "Temple" for His own inhabitation, where He is "at rest for ever" (1 Cor. iii. 16, vi. 19; 1 Pet. iv. 14). This could not be, so far as we know, without the Incarnation and Ascension of Christ. Through that glorified humanity alone could the Holy Spirit find an inlet into the very inward parts of men to dwell there; and through it alone could He unite all those persons in whom He dwells into a living and solid whole.

§ 8.

It was one of the first acts of our Lord Jesus Christ after He rose from the dead to inaugurate the new departure. He can hardly be said to have formed a Church during His lifetime. The materials for it had been gathered; and, in separating twelve of His disciples from the rest and giving them a title of office, He had even begun to prepare the structure of His society. But He still spoke of the creation of His Church as a future thing: "Upon this rock I will build My Church" (S. Matt. xvi. 18). In the outset of His Passion, He gave them their bond of union in the first impartition of His Body and Blood. But as yet, it was only like what we may imagine to have taken place at the creation of the first Adam,—the dust of the earth being got ready to receive the Breath which made him a living soul. Then came the Breath. Into the structural unit already prepared, the Risen Lord, on the evening of His Resurrection,

breathed His own incorruptible life and made it a Church. The gift was not yet that full gift which He was afterwards to give—not "the Holy Spirit," but "Holy Spirit"—a gift similar to that which is still bestowed in Baptism,—the gift of new life (S. John xx. 22). There is a gradation in the gifts of God: first life, afterwards that for which life is worth having. This first gift Jesus was already competent by His victory over death to bestow. The second, as we have already said, He gained by His Ascension. Then, upon the regenerate but still infant Church, He poured forth all at once the indwelling Spirit with His mature gifts of power, of holiness, of conscious knowledge, and of world-convincing utterance.

§ 9.

When the Church is described in Scripture as a Body, and the Body of Christ, the description is more than a metaphor. It is not a case of mere analogy. The Church stands to Jesus Christ in the same relation as a man's body does to his personal self. Of course there are differences in the mode of connexion, which it would be easy to point out; but the connexion is as close and vital as in the case of the natural body. It does not fully explain the phrase to say, that the Church is as dependent upon Christ, as a body upon connexion with its head. As in the animal organism, the relation is not one-sided only; it is reciprocal. Connexion with the Church affects Christ's life as well as hers. Though of course He is not in any way dependent upon her for existence, not

even in His human nature, far less in His Divine, yet the Church is necessary to the fulness of His incarnate life. The union between Christ and her is so real that the two together make up a single entity. He is not His whole self without the many members who are joined to Him. When we speak of "Christ" (though not, of course, in every context) we speak of both in conjunction. "For as the body is one, and hath many members, so also is Christ" (1 Cor. xii. 12). A very remarkable and difficult passage of S. Paul brings out this reciprocity of relation. It speaks not only of Christ as a gift to the Church, but of the Church as performing a corresponding function for Christ. After dwelling on the marvellous greatness of the hope held out to us in the Resurrection and Ascension of Christ, and His present and perpetual supremacy over all creation, the writer adds: "And Him," being what we have now described Him, "He gave as Head over all things to the Church, which in fact (ἥτις) is His Body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all" (Eph. i. 22, 23). So the last clause is usually translated; but there is no reason why the verb should not be considered passive here, as in other similar passages. It will then give an even stronger meaning: "His Body, the fulness of Him who is fulfilled with all things in all." S. Paul is thus seen to say, that the Church is the present and future organ of Christ's complete self-manifestation. He is "fulfilled" in her. In and through her He displays the richness of His own exalted life.

This is the very meaning of a "body." That

Christ has a heavenly body of His own, apart from other men, we cannot doubt,—in which He is manifested to celestial beings. It may, however, be possible to separate too sharply between that Body (sometimes, erroneously, called His natural Body), and the Church which is His mystical Body. But whatever the relation may be between His glorified Body and the mystical, it is certain that He has not done with the earth, and withdrawn from it. He still is incarnate not only in heaven, but here also. He wears a bodily presentment upon earth, which expresses Him and is identified with Him. Clothed in it, He acts and speaks among men still. It is a true body, with a clear and visible and well-defined outline, as well as with a strong differentiation of its parts, and an organic bond between them. That body is His Church. It is not enough to say that she represents Him, for a representative has a personal life apart from him who is represented. But the Church, though we legitimately personify her, is not a person, and has no life of her own apart from Him. It is His life which animates her, and which forms the bond between her various members. It is His Spirit which inhabits her, and creates in her an identity of consciousness with His own, so that the Apostle can say, "We have the mind of Christ" (1 Cor. ii. 16),—that is, we not only have feelings and views of life like those which He entertained (*φρόνημα*, Phil. ii. 5), but we think His own thoughts and share His inmost intuitions (*νοῦς*).

Thus the Church now, as Christ Himself when He

was on earth, is an object both of sight and of faith. She is a visible society of men, which all the world can see and observe; "a city set on an hill" (S. Matt. v. 14). Her laws and organization are familiarly known. The most worldly and unbelieving of statesmen are obliged to reckon with them as with practical forces. It can be told in an instant whether a man belongs to this body or not. There is nothing hazy or uncertain about its contour. To draw a distinction between a visible and an invisible Church was unheard of in the apostolic or in primitive days: it was the confusing and sophistical work of an age of schisms. The Church is not called a "mystical" body because of difficulty in ascertaining its form; nor do we say, "I *believe* (in the existence of) the the Holy Catholic Church" because we suppose it to consist of an aggregation of devout souls known only to God. Faith comes in for a different reason. It is because faith alone can discern the true nature of the Society which is seen by all. Faith alone, amidst sore trials and perplexities, is able to acknowledge that the life of the Church is indeed the life of her Ascended Head,—that the visible company of men is, in spite of appearances, the home and the embodiment of a Divine principle, which will never leave it, nor suffer it permanently and universally to be prevailed against.

§ 10.

In thus describing the Body of Christ as a visible structure we are not forgetful of the generations of

faithful men who have passed away from this world. They are still members of the mystical Body. Christ, who has "ascended up far above all heavens that He may fill all things" (Eph. iv. 10), presents Himself in due form alike in heaven and in Paradise and on earth; but the Body in which He does so is the same Body throughout. This is not the place at which to enter on the doctrine of the Intermediate State; but it is impossible to speak of that Body of living souls in which the life of Jesus is still lodged, without saying that the unseen parts of it are in full and vital connexion with the seen in "the communion of the Holy Ghost" (2 Cor. xiii. 14). The dead act upon the living and are reacted upon by them in ways which it is not easy to state, but which are none the less real. Their recorded lives, their extant writings, the undying consequences of what they did while on earth, the tone which they set; and besides that, their continued intercessions, of which we cannot doubt, and sometimes, it may be, still more direct and active interpositions; in all these ways the faithful dead powerfully affect the living world,—so much so, that one of the latest products of Old Testament inspiration, according to the most probable interpretation of it, represents the world, with all its political and social forces, as helplessly (though unconsciously) enthralled and swayed by the saints at rest "in their beds" (Ps. cxlix. 5, comp. Isa. lvii. 1, 2). And in like manner, though we cannot be sure how far their knowledge of current events on earth extends, without question they are in some way interested in these

events, so far as they affect the glory of Christ. The successes and failures of the Church on earth, the hastening or retarding of the final Advent, the revivals of true religion or the sinking into lethargy and falsehood,—probably also the spiritual vicissitudes of individual souls with whom the connexion while on earth was close,—all touch the departed, though we may shrink from affirming how. This lies at the base of those latest additions by which the Apostles' Creed was brought into its present form,—the articles which brought out the descent of our Lord into hell, and which affirmed "the Communion of Saints." By those articles the Christian consciousness made explicit to itself the feeling that death does not break up the community of interests which are eternal. There is so necessary a fellowship between all who are vitally united to Christ that they still, in a sense which was typically shewn forth at Jerusalem in the first ays, "have all things common" (Acts iv. 32).

It seems hardly necessary to add, what is within our immediate perception, that the Communion of Saints does not mean only the fellowship of the living with the dead, but the fellowship between the members of those classes amongst themselves also. The welfare of one is the welfare of all. The ancient Stoic philosophy caught a glimpse of this truth when it taught that every "wise man" in the world was benefited by every other wise man's acts of perfection. If the conception had been enlarged so as to include not only a proud aristocracy of philosophers, but

humble and struggling seekers after righteousness, and if the community had been not one between scattered individuals undiscoverable to each other, but between all the members of a well-known and divinely organized Body, the Stoic doctrine would have failed but little of the perfected idea of the Christian fellowship.

Chapter VIII.

The Characteristics of the Church.

The Notes of the Church not Visible Tokens but Inward Characteristics—Unity of the Church dependent on Historical Continuity—Holiness of the Church—The Church Catholic mainly in respect of her Doctrine—Tradition fixed by Scripture—Inspiration and Fulness of the Bible—Freedom of Investigation and Authority of the Church—The Church Apostolic in virtue of her Mission—The Christian Ministry—Identity of the Church Militant and Triumphant.

§ 1.

Perhaps the simplest definition of the Church is that which will have been gathered from the foregoing chapter. The Church is that organized society of men which was founded by Jesus Christ upon His Apostles, and which received from Him for all time the gift of His indwelling Spirit.

This society is described in the Creeds by four great epithets. The notes, as they are called, of Christ's Church, are not always borne as visibly upon her front as they ought to be. This must with shame be confessed; and those who maintain that the true Church is so unmistakably distinguished by them as to be known from false Churches at a glance, are driven to strange interpretations of history. Nevertheless, these notes, however they may be outwardly

obscured, are deeply engraven upon her heart. They are more than a mark at which she aims. Her essential being is bound up in them; and so far as she is true to her own self she exhibits them. Although from time to time, and in particular places, the men who represent her may fail to be impressed with the character described in these four words, the Church herself never loses it. Endowed, as the Bride of Christ, with an imperishable life, the Church, as long as she lives, is One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic.

§ 2.

A Church which is the embodiment of the risen life of Christ, and the instrument of His indwelling Spirit, is necessarily marked by unity. The Christian Church is, and can be, but one. Much confusion of thought, however, exists at present upon this point, and earnest inquirers are often perplexed by the conflicting answers given to their question, where this one Church is to be found. The thought which alone offers a hope of clearness is that which is touched in our definition of the Church. The Church is, and can be, but one, because Christ founded but one society, and endowed it with but one life. His Apostles were not sent forth to form separate schools of followers, working in friendly emulation, and each school provided with some partial gift of the Holy Ghost. The Apostles were the united chiefs of a single organization, in which the fulness of the Spirit dwelt. Their watchword was: "One Body, One Spirit" (Eph. iv. 4). By this watchword both her

numerical and her integral unity are secured, and we see that there cannot be more than one Church, nor a Church composed of finally severed fractions. A single life cannot build for itself more than a single living domicile; and a single organism cannot represent more than a single inward principle. The one Spirit is a guarantee for the unity of the Body; the one Body is a guarantee for the unity of the Spirit. The Church is both outwardly and inwardly one,—one through the whole length of time from the first century to the nineteenth, one all over the world of space,—one (as we have said) in all conditions of human existence terrestrial and ultra-terrestrial. The unity of her origin is our clue. Firmly grasping this thought, of an indestructible and Divine life, once for all imparted to a single historical society, we are able to look at the present divisions of Christendom and yet say that the Church is one.

If we look at the different groups of Christians in the world, we shall see, in the first place, that they are of two classes. There are those which, in greater or lesser degrees of perfectness, preserve a historical continuity with the original foundation of the Church: and there are those which have a later origin, and are practically new societies. To the former class belong, for example, the Roman, the Coptic, the Scandinavian Churches; to the latter class belonged in old days the Montanists and Novatianists, in modern times the Congregationalists and Irvingites, and many of the sects of Russia.

With regard to this latter class, the position stands

thus. The men who compose them are, as individuals, members of the Church, provided that they have received Christian Baptism, though they have preferred to transfer themselves to other bodies, or have been brought up in other bodies from their childhood. They are upon the roll of the Church, but their fellowship with her is in a state of suspension. In order to enjoy the full benefits of the Church, they have but to renounce communication with the separate bodies to which they are attached, and they are at once re-admitted (if there be nothing else against them) to active membership in the historical society. But the separate bodies themselves are on a different footing. There can be no question of intercommunion between the historical Church and them. Considered as bodies, they form no part of the Church of Christ, but occupy (even when unintentionally) a position of rivalry and antagonism towards it. They are Christian sects, in so far as they are composed of Christian men; but their Christianity is (so to speak) accidental; they contain no perpetual and pledged inhabitation of the Spirit. Often they abound in graces, which put the Church to shame; but the graces are imported into them from the Church, through the gracious persons who join them: they are not communicated to the individuals from the inherent wealth of the separate society. And so it comes to pass that such sects live out their lives; and after performing the work for which the Divine Providence allowed them to rise, and receiving fitting rewards and blessings from God, at length, like other human institutions,

they decay and disappear. The good elements in them pass back into the historical Church; the worse element is hardened into active "evil will at Sion," and like the grass upon the housetops "withers afore it be plucked up" (Ps. cxxix. 5, 6). While the Church, therefore, is unfeignedly thankful for the good which it pleases God to do through such societies, and can join with them in many good works, and loves every devout member of them, she cannot acquiesce in their separate existence. She must always yearn to draw back into her own bosom every choice spirit which adorns them, recognising those spirits as, but for a mistake, her own. Every useful suggestion which the sects can make, she would endeavour to adapt and adopt,—if for no other reason, at least to take away any semblance of just cause for remaining aloof from her. Meanwhile the unity of the Church herself is clearly not broken up by parties of men withdrawing from her and establishing themselves outside.

We turn now to the first class of Christian aggregates,—those whose historical existence dates back to the first formation of the Church. These may be called "Churches." The plural title does not contradict the unity of the Church. When the Apostolic writers speak of "Churches," they do not mean independent organizations spreading themselves side by side; they mean local branches of the same world-wide organization, the Church. Thus in Scripture we read of the Seven Churches of Asia; and in modern language we can legitimately speak of the Church of

England, the Church of France, the Church of Scotland. No one of the Churches professes to be "the Church,"—except, indeed, the Roman. The popular exponents of the Roman belief treat "the Church" as exactly co-extensive with that group of Christians who admit the claims of the Roman Bishop, and thereby they go near to reduce themselves to a sect, taking that for its basis of separation. All other Churches are ready to acknowledge that they are but parts of a greater whole. They do not consider the gatherings of their bishops to be entitled to speak for universal Christendom; and for the solution of final difficulties they look on, like Cranmer, to "the next General Council."

Each of these Churches ought, indeed, to display within its limited sphere the four notes of the whole society, and to be inwardly one, as well as holy, catholic, and apostolic. But the failure of any particular Church is not the failure of the whole, nor is it fatal to the doctrine of the unity of Christ's society that men may point to a local branch which suffers from inward dissensions or confusions.

These various Churches, tracing back their organic life to the one historical source, together compose the Church, not as a mere aggregate, but as indeed a living unit. It is, however, mainly by faith and hope that we perceive their unity at present, and not, as it should be, by sight also. It is plain that all these Churches ought to be in full communion with each other. A schism within the Body is an even sadder spectacle than a separation from it; and those who

are responsible for the beginning, or for the perpetuation, of such a schism are guilty of the gravest of sins. The different Churches ought to deal with one another in the largest spirit of forbearance and tenderness, remembering that in the imperfect and probationary stage of existence through which we are passing, errors and misunderstandings cannot fail to arise. They ought to make generous allowance for national and local idiosyncrasies—to welcome, and not only to tolerate, wide divergencies in thought and practice, as all tending to bring out, under the breath of the Spirit of charity, the manifold fertility of the Christian life. Even when a neighbour Church is to blame, and becomes corrupt or mutilated, it ought not to be excommunicated unless communion with it directly involves partaking in its fault. There are, no doubt, occasions when it is necessary and right to take this extreme step. When sinful terms of communion are explicitly imposed, then, but only then, separation is held to be justified. Yet even then, the excommunication ought to be uttered, not in human pride and anger, but in love and meekness, for the sake of correction; and it ought to be removed as soon as possible; and incessant efforts should be made to regain the normal relations (2 Thess. iii. 14, 15). To the primitive Christians it would have been impossible to imagine the situation which to us is familiar, of one Church quietly ignoring the existence of another which has had differences with it, and going on as if it were only concerned with its own internal affairs. Selfish isolation of that kind must

end at last in the extinction or apostasy of such a branch of the Church; for the Spirit by which the Church lives is above all things a Spirit of love.

But unity is only the full expression of love: and where there is love, and a true striving after reconciliation, the loss of intercommunion between these branches of the one historical society is only a temporary disaster, not a real disruption. It is only impatience and unbelief which thinks that the Church's original unity is lost. Most imperfect it is, —sinfully and calamitously so,—but it is not at an end. The one life, once given, is still flowing on through those apparently divided members, and must one day triumphantly bring them again into a unity made the richer and more precious for having been lost and found again.[1] Even now, we may dwell with thankfulness upon those pledges of unity of which S. Paul speaks,—the unity of the object of the Church's worship,—the substantial unity of the doctrine received by all her branches,—the unity of her Sacraments (at least the chief of them) which are everywhere the same,—"One Lord, one faith, one

[1] It may be observed that in S. John x. 16 the original is not correctly rendered in the English Bible. Our Lord says, "They shall become one flock, one Shepherd," not "There shall be one fold." It must not, however, be inferred that our Lord thought of having many folds, or of doing without a fold at all. It was the custom for the flocks of several shepherds to be enclosed in the same fold; and our Lord, intending to include in His new Catholic Church both the Jews who were "of this fold," and the Gentiles who were of none, promised that they should not only be comprised within the same external system, but should be completely fused into a living unity. Within His one fold there should be not many flocks, but one, as being all the sheep of one Shepherd.

Baptism" (Eph. iv. 5). And it is a comfort, in our present anomalous condition, to observe that our Lord does not exactly pray for His disciples that they may be kept in such unity as they already had, but that, being kept true to the revelation of God's love which they had received, they might be brought thereby to a diviner unity. "Holy Father, keep them in Thy Name which Thou hast given Me, in order that they may be one, even as We" (S. John xvii. 11). And S. Paul, in the same chapter where he speaks of the Christian unity as a possession to be "kept" by strenuous exertions (σπουδάζοντες τηρεῖν), goes on to speak of it as a goal of final attainment, not as a fact already realised. All the gifts, which were won for the Church by the Ascension, were, he says, destined "for the full equipment of the saints unto the work of ministry, for the building up of the Body of Christ, until we,—all we,—arrive at the unity of the faith and of the deeper knowledge of the Son of God, at a full-grown man, at the measure of stature which expresses the plenitude of Christ" (Eph. iv. 12, 13).

§ 3.

The same fact which makes the Church One, makes it also Holy. It could not be otherwise with a society which embodies the life of Christ and is animated by the Holy Ghost. Here again, it is true, the same perplexity encounters us as in considering Church unity. Appearances are often against us. The state of the Church has sometimes been a scandal to the world, and to religious but impatient children

of her own. Again and again detachments of men, disappointed with the Church, have quitted her communion in the vain hope of establishing a pure society outside. But our Lord told us to expect that in its earthly career His Church would contain a mixture of good and bad. He likened it to a field with tares sown among the wheat, awaiting the harvest before disentanglement could be effected. To expect the realisation of perfect holiness throughout the Church on earth is as vain as to expect the realisation of perfect unity or perfect knowledge. Indeed one great aspect of the Church would be destroyed if none were admitted into her fellowship till they were finished saints. She could not in that case act as the organ of redemption in a corrupt world. Like our Lord Himself when on earth, if she would recover the lost, she must be truly the "friend of publicans and sinners." She is constrained by the very spirit of holiness which animates her, no less than by the spirit of love, to open her arms freely to the most imperfect, and to attract and not repel. The Church is a school, for instruction in righteousness, as well as for instruction in doctrine (S. Matt. xxviii. 19; μαθητεύσατε). All disciples who promise fairly are welcome, and receive a patient education. It is not expected that those who enter the sacred shade will be at once perfectly cured of all sinful impulses and erroneous tendencies. Even among those who in the end repay the care bestowed on them, the struggle is often long, and doubtful to the last. And there are many complete failures. Not all the disciples of the Church turn

out well, nor all her teachers. Sometimes, in the mysterious ebb of the spirit of sanctity, ungodliness appears to take possession of large tracts of the Church,—as in the vileness of the fifteenth century in Italy,—or the deadness of the eighteenth in England. But, not to speak of the faithful work which even at those worst times is being done in secret, the Church does not lose her character of holiness by these melancholy lapses. Though in a certain sense even the Church as a whole may be said to have incurred guilt, and to have been defiled, yet the Spirit which is in her shews itself after such times as a spirit of repentance and return, and forgiveness is vouchsafed, and the sin put away, and the Church is seen to be a Holy Church,—not by reason of having never fallen, but by reason of being "washed" (Eph. v. 26).

Nor, indeed, is her holiness only the holiness of a thing forgiven. All along, the sins which have stained her history have been contrary to her own principles. Her better self has protested against them and disowned them. Her bitterest assailants have found no more forcible argument than to expose the inconsistency between her holy professions and the reprehensible conduct which they attributed to her. No deliberate consent of the Church has ever been given to any sinful thing. Every movement towards improved morality has had its origin in her recognised doctrine of right and wrong. However she may have been misrepresented at any given time by the men who publicly stood for her, the aim and intention of the Church was always to maintain and diffuse holi-

ness, and to save men from their sins. This is the object of all her permanent institutions,—the sacraments, the ministry, the preaching, the laws, the discipline. If ever anything was done which was false to this fundamental purpose, the healthful action of the infused life of Christ soon reasserted itself; and in that "fellowship one with another," which is established by the Church's unity, "the Blood of Jesus" cleanses the Church at large, as well as the penitent souls within her, "from all sin" (1 John i. 7).

§ 4.

The reason why the Church is called Catholic is frequently misconceived. It is supposed that the title refers mainly to her local extension. So, in the *Te Deum*, it is roughly rendered "the Holy Church throughout all the world." But any Greek scholar feels at once that much more than this is involved in the very form of the adjective. The Church is not merely ἡ καθόλου, that is, the Church in general, as opposed to the Church of a particular place or nation; but ἡ καθολική, the Church whose inward character is one of universality. Thus in one of the very earliest writings in which the title occurs—the Martyrdom of S. Polycarp—a separate clause is felt to be necessary in order to convey the idea of actual extension, "the Catholic Church throughout the world" (τῆς κατὰ τὴν οἰκουμένην καθολικῆς ἐκκλησίας); while on the other hand the title itself is given to a single branch of the Christian Society, and Polycarp is styled—at least according to one form of the text—"Bishop of the

Catholic Church in Smyrna" (*τῆς ἐν Σμύρνῃ καθολικῆς ἐκκλησίας*). The fixing of the word to its more outward sense seems to be due to Latin writers, not well acquainted with the Greek language, and naturally prone to think more of practical organization than of ideal characteristics. Oriental teachers, while not excluding the local notion, rightly insisted on the metaphysical notion as well. The Church, says S. Cyril of Jerusalem, "is called Catholic because it exists over all the world from one end of the earth to the other; and because it teaches universally (*καθολικῶς*), and with no omissions, the entire body of doctrines which men ought to know." The real opposite of "Catholic" is not "local," nor even "partial," but "heretical."

It is indeed of great practical importance to remember that the Church is, as a matter of fact, far greater than that fraction of it with which any one of us happens to be acquainted. It enlarges the heart and mind to meditate upon the unity of those widely spreading branches. But the very reason why the Church is thus spread abroad lies in her intrinsic character. It is her nature to penetrate everywhere and to embrace all. Resolutely refusing to be cramped and petrified and stereotyped, by reason of the free Spirit which animates her, she is capable of adapting herself to all circumstances. Our religion,—no longer, like that of the Jews, given under a form suitable to one race only,—is equally at home among all nations and in all climates, in all times, under all forms of government, amidst all varieties of social and intel-

lectual culture. In fact, like Christ Himself, the Catholic Church is in sympathy with everything that is truly human, and cannot acquiesce in being bounded by anything less large than humanity, being indeed co-extensive with the new humanity inaugurated by Christ. Her mission is to lay hold upon every soul, and—not to force it into some narrow and uniform mould, but to train and develope it into shewing forth those features of the life of Christ for which it was predestined.

Nor is this all. If we enquire still further what it is which qualifies the Church thus to deal with all conditions of men, we find that it is the nature of the message which she bears. The Church is a Catholic Church, because her Gospel is a Catholic Gospel. There is no man to whom it is inapplicable. In some respects all mankind are alike. All need to be taught the character of God; all have sinned, and feel, at bottom, the need of some reparation for their sins; all require Divine assistance for their restoration as individuals and as members of society. These are the needs which are met by the chief elements in the Gospel; and the Catholic Church does not allow herself to be turned aside from the declaration of these chief elements,—to the right hand or to the left. While the sects form themselves for the purpose of emphasizing some peculiar view,—it may be a true one, or it may be false,—or for the purpose of promoting some peculiar practice, whether right or wrong,—the Catholic Church holds on her way, "rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Tim. ii. 15),

—or, as S. Paul's word more probably implies, laying down the word of truth like a great road that goes straight ahead, without losing itself in side issues and speculations which lead nowhither. Not that the Church is careless or contemptuous concerning any legitimate subject of inquiry. All truth is sacred to her; and her Catholicity is displayed both in her vigorous maintenance of the supremacy of the great master-facts, and in the patient orthodoxy with which she works them out in their application to detail. She is, then, Catholic mainly for this reason, because of the doctrine round which she rallies men;—because she teaches the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. It is a mistake to suppose that the Church has any "distinctive doctrines;" for everything that is true is an integral part of her belief, and everything false is under her ban.

§ 5.

It might be feared lest this Catholicity of which we have spoken should pass into a vague colourless, enfeebled complacency towards all persons and parties professing to seek truth, such as passes at the present day for Catholicity in the semi-Christianized world. So assuredly it would, were it not for the power of the primitive Tradition within the Church. Respect for her traditions has always been a chief note of the Church, and the great safeguard of her Catholicity. In this she is governed, not merely by principles of human conservatism, but by a sense of Divine responsibility. Knowing herself to

have no earthly origin, the result of mutual consent, but to have been created and raised up by God for this very purpose, to bear witness to Christ, she has always felt herself bound, as the first of her duties, to deliver from age to age the revelation made to her at the outset, unimpaired, and unadulterated. Voluntary societies, such as the sects, are under no such obligations. To modify the doctrines of their founders is, in them, no crime. But in the Church it would be the gravest of all crimes. She believes that her Founder was Himself "the Truth" (S. John xiv. 6). She knows that He imparted to her, once and for all, "the Spirit of truth" (S. John xvi. 13). It is her conviction that in the first burst of His inspiration, He opened to the earliest generation of believers, the Apostles and those next to them, the entire wealth of truth, in the form in which they could apprehend it and set it forth. Through those illuminated teachers she received the truth, as a sacred trust, for the benefit of humanity to the furthest shores and to the latest posterity. "Keep the deposit" (1 Tim. vi. 20), is the solemn injunction of the departing Apostles. "Contend earnestly for the faith once for all delivered to the saints" (S. Jude 3), repeat their immediate associates, who shared their inspiration. "Let no innovation be made upon the received tradition," is the response of the Roman chair in the third century. "Let the ancient customs hold good," echoes the Nicene Council in the fourth. To this test everything is brought. Is it in accordance with the historical belief and practice of the Church? If

not, it stands self-condemned. By this test, the Nicene Fathers rejected Arianism. By this test the controversies of modern times must be settled. No new-fangled inventions are to be joined with that sacred heirloom,—not even if, in some quarters, they are now inveterate enough to have gained a look of antiquity; and if any portion of the heirloom has in any quarter been discarded or ignored, it must be recovered and brought into use again before the claim to the title of Catholic can be made out.

Holy Scripture, and especially the New Testament, is the anchor of Catholic tradition. It would not, indeed, be true to history to trace back all Christian doctrine and practice to the existing writings of the Apostles, for the Catholic tradition is older than those writings, and there are many phrases in them which we should be much perplexed to explain, but for the Catholic tradition. The scattered notices of the observance of "the Lord's day" (Rev. i. 10) may be given as an instance. We know what these mean, not by any explanations in the New Testament itself, but by the practical commentary of Church life. But one chief factor in the value of the New Testament is this, that it preserves for us a historical record of the faith and practice of the first days, to serve as a standard of reference. If it is essential to Catholicity that the last things in the Church should agree with the first, we have here a witness which cannot be tampered with. It might have been possible for the Holy Spirit dwelling in the Church to have secured the permanence of the Church's

doctrine without this means; but as the Church is an aggregate of men who still retain their natural propensities, and as it is the proverbial tendency of oral traditions to gather new touches and to lose some of the old, the Holy Spirit has provided the Church with these written documents,—themselves the gathering up of her own first and best thoughts—as a testimony against later departures. The Holy Spirit within the Church is constantly bearing witness to the Scriptures; and if the appeal to the Scriptures is ever distasteful to any part of the Church, it is a clear sign that some other spirit is usurping the place of the Spirit of Christ. It has always been one of the proudest boasts of the Church, that she is the "Keeper of Holy Writ." Such a title implies her unalterable fidelity to the tradition with which, under the guidance of the Apostles, she started on her historical career.

§ 6.

But while the Holy Scriptures are the great security for the stability of Catholic doctrine, they represent none the less its inexhaustible richness, and therefore the progressive element in it. They are far more than a mine of antiquarian information about the beliefs and practices of the early Christians. No word of God can ever become a dead, obsolete thing. The Scriptures are a living and eternal Voice of God, speaking to all ages as freshly as to those who first received them. We believe that the Bible is inspired. There is no portion of it which does not

convey, when rightly studied, instruction from God for the guidance of thought and life. "Every passage of Scripture is full of Divine inspiration, and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness" (2 Tim. iii. 16). What S. Paul here says of the Old Testament is at least as true of the New.

The Church is committed to no mechanical views concerning the mode of the Inspiration. She is satisfied with the conviction that the writers were "moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 S. Pet. i. 21). It was a heretical, and not a Catholic teacher, who first maintained that the human penman or mouthpiece of the Spirit was a passive instrument, lying with his faculties dormant under the celestial impulse, like the lyre under the performer's hand. On the contrary, it seems true to believe that the Holy Ghost, who "distributes to every man severally as He wills" (1 Cor. xii. 11), has selected His own agents for this high task, and has so prepared them that their natural temperament, their circumstances and education, their very frailties and faults, have contributed to the effect which He designed to convey. As He was to speak to men, He made His thoughts first to be the thoughts of men, in order that they might be the more persuasive and intelligible, and instinct with human life and sympathy.

Only on the supposition of this freedom of the inspired agent can we understand those little variations and discrepancies,—perhaps mistakes,—which meet us occasionally, for instance, in the Synoptic

Gospels. It would expose the work of God to derision to think that S. Matthew was directly inspired to speak of two demoniacs on the coast of Gadara and S. Mark to speak of one; but to those who have the faith of the Church such things are not difficulties. On the contrary, they lead a reverent and thoughtful mind to a more profound and satisfying conception of inspiration, in which the Holy Ghost is felt to lay hold upon the very roots of the inspired writer's being, and not upon his fingers only Thus the precise form in which the writer's thought clothes itself appears to come more under the head of the Holy Spirit's providence than under that of His special inspiration. It was, we may say without irreverence, the Divine aim rather to breathe a spirit of truth than to secure an infallibility of the letter. Not that the Church abandons the belief that the Scriptures are infallible in that which is of primary importance. The numbers of persons slain in an Old Testament engagement may be wrongly given,—though perhaps by the error of copyists; a quotation may be assigned by an Evangelist to one prophet which really belongs to another,—although some lost fact might give a different aspect to such phenomena; —but accuracy upon details of this nature cannot logically be put on the same footing as accuracy in matters of doctrine, and worship, and moral practice. We could understand how a soul like S. Paul's, penetrated with intense devotion to Christ, might turn with indignant contempt from a learned wrangle over such minutiæ of historical criticism, but by the

very same impulse throw himself ardently into controversy over a word which might confuse or clear men's minds with regard to the nature of our Lord or His method of salvation. Absolute infallibility of doctrinal statement is found in Holy Scripture, because doctrinal statement is the outcome of a whole inner life of thought and adoration and experience; in the other kind of cases accuracy is but a matter of memory or of research.

Infallibility, however, is but one side,—and that the negative side,—of the Scriptural inspiration. It has always been the conviction of the Church that the Scriptures which she has received are not only trustworthy as far as they go, but that they are complete and all-sufficient. Much is to be learned from the history of the formation of the Canon, in which again the general providence of the Holy Ghost co-operates with the instinct imparted by Him to the Church. There is no reason to think that other writings of the Apostles, now lost, were less inspired than those still extant,—any more than unrecorded words and acts of our Lord were less Divine than the recorded ones. But by the Divine will they passed quickly out of sight; and the Church acquiesced in their disappearance. It was gradually felt by the Christian consciousness that the collection of books which we now possess under the name of the Bible was not only truly, but fully, representative of the teaching first received, and that the preservation of other documents would have swelled the bulk of what the Christian has to master, without adding any

new element to its richness. Thus "unscriptural" becomes synonymous with "novel," and therefore with "false," or at least with "unnecessary." Those "fierce words" (as Jeremy Taylor calls them) of S. Basil well express the feeling of the Fathers on this point, "It is a manifest fall from the faith and a manifest incurrence of the charge of arrogancy, either to make light of anything that is in Scripture, or to introduce in addition anything that is not."

Yet, while the *introduction* of anything novel and unscriptural as an article of faith forfeits the title of Catholic, if not of Christian, the *eduction* and development of that which *is* Scriptural and primitive is a mark of Catholic vitality. Fixity in dogmatic expression, the invariable repetition of orthodox formulas, is not a sure sign of the Catholic heart. It may indicate a stagnation of devout thought. The fields of Holy Scripture, though ploughed over for so many centuries, are still as fertile as if they were virgin soil, and every century teaches the Church how she may expect from them larger and larger harvests. No less than Polycarp and Clement, we sit at the feet of the Apostles themselves,—but with our power of understanding them increased by all the labours of the Saints of eighteen hundred years. There cannot fail to be an advance in the Catholic doctrine, if the Church is faithful. The only caution needed is that the faith be not altered in the process. S. Vincent of Lerins, so inexorable towards any novelties, has well laid down the lines of doctrinal advance, when he compares it to the growth of a living thing; never

losing its identity, and always preserving its proportions,—only gaining a fuller differentiation of its parts, and an increase of solidity, and strength, and suppleness.

§ 7.

Thus Catholicity, like unity and like sanctity, still gives us an aim to be aimed at, not an achievement to congratulate ourselves upon. As yet the Holy Spirit has much to do to "lead us into all the truth" (S. John xvi. 13). It can only be fully accomplished when every particular Church, and each individual Christian, insists upon winning and wearing the Catholic title. "Christian is my name," says S. Pacian, "and Catholic is my surname;" and no Christian man, and no Christian body, can without shame make any other confession. But the only pledge of Catholicity which the individual or the particular Church can have, lies in dutiful deference to the authority of the Church at large.

Such deference is not a blind deference, nor opposed to true liberty of thought or to what is called private judgment. There come times when the spirit of error, like that of unholiness, spreads abroad in the Church, and it becomes the duty of the faithful few, or the faithful one, at the cost of whatever isolation, to withstand the prevalent false doctrine of the day. Although the Church is infallible, yet at any given moment the truth may be driven into a corner within her, and an Athanasius, expelled and persecuted and anathematized as a

heretic by his contemporaries, may be the narrow channel through which the stream of true doctrine passes from the fathers to the children. Each Christian is bound to think for himself. He could not otherwise make a good scholar in the school of our Lord. Neither is doubt and hesitancy, in accepting what is taught, always the sign of a wrong temper. Doubt of the truth is often but the feeling after a more delicate form of truth. Although the sceptical spirit, which can only criticize and never firmly believe, is an unchristian spirit, the spirit of enquiry, which believes the truth to be attainable, and questions in order that it may understand, is a spirit characterized in Scripture as a "noble" one (Acts xvii. 11). Indeed, the Apostle's words would justify our believing that "love of the truth," even when entangled among confused and wrong conclusions, may be more pleasing to God than the most correct creed held without being loved (2 Thess. ii. 10). The Apostle, also, and our Lord Himself, recognise that there is in men a faculty for discerning truth which may be trusted to act properly if properly handled. Thus S. Paul describes his method as that of one who "by the manifestation of the truth recommends himself to every conscience of men before God" (2 Cor. iv. 2). And Christ, speaking "to those Jews who had believed Him"—that is, who had but taken the very first step of faith, and were still far from satisfactory views of things,—said, "If ye continue in My word, ye are truly My disciples, and shall know the truth, and the truth shall free you" (S. John viii. 31).

But the true disciple of Christ will recollect that he has not joined a society of adventurous guessers after the truth, in which he is as likely to guess right as any one else, but a society which is already in possession of the truth, and is divinely commissioned to preach and teach it. And though every man may with great profit verify what he is taught, he will not approach the Scriptures as if nothing in them had yet been made out for certain. Much still remains to be explored; but on some points the Church has given her testimony with abundant clearness. It is too late, for instance, to expect the Church to reconsider the doctrine of Christ's Godhead. A man may treat it as an open question, if to him it seems so; but if he does, he sets himself up as a judge of the Church, and therefore of Him who said, "He that despiseth you, despiseth Me, and he that despiseth Me despiseth Him that sent Me" (S. Luke x. 16). The same holds true of many doctrines which have not received as explicit a declaration from the Church, but on which there has been at all times a practical consensus.

If it be asked where a man may find the authoritative teaching of the Catholic Church, the answer is less simple than human impatience would wish. The Church is divided into *ecclesia docens* and *ecclesia quae docetur*, the teachers and the taught. The superior officers of the Society are the accredited and authorised exponents of her doctrine. Yet it is never claimed that the individual priest or bishop is rendered unconditionally infallible by the tenure of

his office. In the teacher, no less than in the taught, doctrinal accuracy depends on faithfulness to the illuminating Spirit and loyalty to the Church at large. There is no sufficient ground for making an exception in the case of the see of Rome. Nothing but an *a priori* demand for a localised infallibility would have led to such a notion,—and it has been falsified in advance by history. A variety of reasons led the early Christians to pay profound deference to the Church of the city of Rome, and to its Bishop as representing that Church; but all the great controversies were settled by other methods than a recourse to him as if he were warranted to be right. It is impossible to make out that the Catholic Church is so focussed,—so necessarily focussed,—in the occupant of one see, that he always correctly represents her tradition. God has taken a way of speaking through His Church which is more like His usual methods, more vital and less mechanical, than that;—a way which involves more discipline to faith, as well as to intelligence, than the consulting of an external oracle and the submission to ready-made decrees.

The truth is not finally and in detail defined except by collaboration and conference of the whole Society. To all the bishops of the Church, according to ancient teaching, the guardianship of the faith is solemnly committed, individually and collectively. They are jointly, and yet singly and equally, responsible for it. What is decided by the universal episcopate may be presumed to be a Catholic decision; but even so, the decision is referred back to the whole

body of the faithful, and Councils are not reputed Ecumenical until their decrees have been ratified by the acceptance of all. Neither is a consensus of the entire Church of to-day sufficient, unless it be in harmony with the teaching of other ages also. "What," asks S. Vincent, "will the Catholic Christian do, if some recent corruption, not content with contaminating a single branch, proceeds to contaminate the whole Church alike? At such a time he will see to it that he cleaves to antiquity, which is beyond the reach of modern and seductive fraudulence." By such reciprocal action between Church and Church, and between the teachers and the taught, and between age and age, unity and love and mutual confidence are developed; and that Spirit of Christ, by whom the Church is made Catholic as well as One and Holy, is felt to pervade the whole Body both in time and in space.

§ 8.

The final note of the Church of God is that she is Apostolic. This title belongs to her, not in virtue of her teaching the primitive doctrine,—or aiming at a simplicity of life like that of the Apostles, but in virtue of the unfailing Mission with which she is charged. She is still as truly *sent* as the first agents in her foundation were,—nay, as Christ Himself was. In fact, her mission may not only be compared to His:—it is historically the same. Every word in our Lord's great sentence, uttered on the night of the Resurrection, brings this out. "According as the

Father hath commissioned Me (ἀπέσταλκέν με), I also send you" (πέμπω ὑμᾶς, S. John xx. 21). Our Lord's mission was not come to an end, to be succeeded by a similar one. His mission was still in force,—we may say rather, was just coming into full force; and the way in which He exercises it is through His Apostolic Church. Nor is the impulse, by which He first sent the Church out, spent, nor will it ever be spent: it is a continuous sending,—as continuous as that which makes it effectual, namely, the flowing forth of the Holy Spirit into the Church (Rev. xxii. 1). It was much more than a promise of doctrinal infallibility which Christ made when He said, "The gates of Hades shall not prevail against her" (S. Matt. xvi. 18). Dogmatic error is only one of the forms in which the life of the Church is threatened; but she is proof against them all. Particular branches of the Church may decay, and die out, and be exterminated; but the Church as a whole not only lives, but remains as young as ever. She has the promise of shewing no "wrinkle" of old age, as well as that of shewing no "spot" of sin (Eph. v. 27). No powers that she once had, have been lost to her by the action of time. If she is tauntingly asked why she does not work miracles now, as she professes to have done in earlier days, she cannot without unfaithfulness say that the power to do them has been withdrawn from her; the answer is that the circumstances have changed. Our Lord Himself, and the Apostles, did not work miracles except when they perceived that circumstances demanded them; and if circumstances again demand

them, precisely the same "power of the Lord will be present" with us that we should do them (S. Luke v. 17); for it is but one mode of operation of that Spirit who is still and for ever the life and vigour of the Church.

At times, indeed, she is apt to lose the sense of her Divine mission to mankind, to abandon enterprise amongst the unconverted, and to rest content with looking after herself. Portions of her may lapse into worldly ways,—either by what is called Erastianism, —that is, by putting herself at the disposal of earthly forces,—or on the other hand by an imitation of Imperialism, using her spiritual pretensions to exalt herself into a kingdom like the kingdoms of this world, and mistress of them. But in spite of such unfaithfulnesses, the Lord still uses her as His plenipotentiary envoy in the world, content even to suffer by her misrepresentation. From age to age she goes on exercising the powers with which He entrusts her, in His Name and with His authority preaching the Gospel and teaching the truth, forgiving sins and retaining them, binding and loosing—that is, laying down regulations for the discipline of her children (S. Matt. xvi. 19),—blessing and interceding and offering the perpetual Sacrifice, administering the means of sanctification, and appointing men to sacred offices.

§ 9.

Here comes in the doctrine of the Christian ministry. We must plainly recognise at the outset that it is the whole body of the Church which is apostolic,

and not only a particular order within it. No proof is forthcoming that the commission given by Christ on the evening of His Resurrection was addressed to "the eleven," to the exclusion of "them that were with them" (S. Luke xxiv. 33); or that the Holy Ghost, on the day of Pentecost, fell only on the Twelve, to be by them dispensed to the rest. The entire Society received the mission; the entire Society received at once the inspiration by which it was qualified to perform it. No distinctions that exist within her are such as to break up the Church's unity. Within the apostolic Church all are priests. There is no sacerdotal caste,—as some opponents of Catholic doctrine have imagined the Church to create,—performing religious offices for a secular laity. The contrast between clergy and laity is that between a higher and a lower degree in the priesthood. This is implied in the ancient title of "Ordination," and of "Holy Orders," which bear witness to the fact that the difference between clergy and laity is one of function and arrangement and mutual relations, not a difference of fundamental opposites. If wilfully severed from the faithful laity, the clergy would have no right to act in the name of Christ. Their priestly ministries are those of the whole body, performed through them as its natural organs.

But there are two things which must not be forgotten. Those who deny the sacerdotal character of the Christian ministry are too apt to destroy along with it the sacerdotal character of the Christian laity, and to make the doctrine that we all are priests

equivalent to the doctrine that none are. The true priesthood of Christians contains more than a right of direct approach to God for ourselves. It consecrates us, in our several stations, to be mediators on behalf of others, and lays upon us the responsibilities as well as the privileges of spiritual authority. Promotion in the hierarchy of which we are all members carries with it an intensified power of priesthood. And secondly, the order of the Church is not a thing of conventional polity; it is an essential. Our Lord, as we have said before, had already given the rudiments of a structure to His society before His Passion. Such the Holy Ghost found it at His coming, and as such He sealed it. It would have been strangely incongruous for that Spirit, whose work is universally a work of order, to choose an amorphous and unorganized collection of men to be His apostolic instrument for the redemption of mankind. In order to the welfare of the body, the proper relation of the part to the whole must be preserved, and of the whole to the part; and if the eye cannot see except in its place in the body, no more can the body reject the Divinely appointed eye, and develope some other organ of sight.

It is sometimes thought that the ministry of the Church derives its authority by delegation from below; that for convenience' sake some members of the society are deputed to represent the rest, and that the functions which they perform might, but for that deputation, be as well performed by any other Christian. Such a theory is not agreeable to the

mode of ordination prescribed in Scripture and practised from the beginning by the Church. The setting apart of the first deacons may be taken as a case in point. There, the faithful laity are invited to select the men for the office; for the clergy are not a close corporation, to co-opt among themselves, and to this day the voice of the faithful laity is asked at every Catholic ordination. But their nominees do not become ministers by the act of nomination. It is absolutely reserved to the supreme order in the Church to determine whether they shall be made so or not. The Apostles "appoint" the selected persons (Acts vi. 3)—this is the investiture with mission and jurisdiction; the Apostles, with prayer, "laid their hands upon them,"—this confers on them the sacred character and spiritual gift, by which they are indelibly distinguished from the rest of the faithful, and enriched with grace for their duties. These two things are necessary to an apostolic Church,—that its ministry should have ordination proper,—or the sacred character and gift,—and mission, or the authority to execute the office. To these is added, for the sake of order in working, jurisdiction, or the assignment of a sphere of labour. And these are not given by the mass of the faithful, or by their lay representatives. A king, for instance, may appoint to a bishopric, or the ratepayers of a parish elect a clergyman for their incumbent; but the clergyman only becomes incumbent when the bishop institutes him to the charge of those souls; and the king's nominee remains what he was before, until the bishops

of the Church have laid hands on him. If the theory of delegation from below were correct, the ordaining hands would be those of the laity; and on each avoidance of the see, the representatives of the diocese would confer on the man who was to be their bishop the power which had passed back to them at his predecessor's death. But this is unheard of in Scripture or antiquity. The authority to ordain, along with other powers of government, is lodged by S. Paul solely in the hands of a Timothy and a Titus (1 Tim. v. 22; Titus i. 5), who are responsible for it to God alone, with the evident intention that they in their turn should provide for a due succession (2 Tim. ii. 2).

Our scanty materials for the history of the end of the first century, and of the beginning of the second, have caused some doubts about the organization of the Churches of that date; but the doubt is scarcely a serious one. If in any quarters some little confusion for a while prevailed, it had all passed away within the lifetime of those who had learned from Apostles in person, and it had come to be recognised that no Church could be complete without the three orders of the ministry. Bishops alone could ordain. By whatever steps this conviction may have been established,—whether (as is probable) by direct command of the Apostles, acting on the instructions of our Lord, or by the natural instinct of the Church,—in any case it was the work of the Holy Ghost. The apostolic succession is the guarantee of the continued historical identity of the Church. No Church which has lost

it can complain, if the validity of its acts is questioned by those Churches which retain the primitive tradition.

§ 10.

This One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church will preserve her identity not only to the end of this dispensation, but for ever. The Bride of Christ, and Mother of us all, has a career which resembles in many ways that of any typical child of hers. She is on her probation in this world; and though we are certain that she is indefectible, yet the promise is not one which will allow of the relaxation of vigilance. Holy Scripture warns us of great fallings away, of false doctrines presented under specious appearances, of immoral teaching and practice supported by miracles and made to look like the severity of holiness. It is possible that the true Church may at last be but a remnant, as compared in numbers with the apostate mass; possible also that the apostasy may be fostered by some of the most influential sees in Christendom. There is no positive assurance regarding the future of any special Church. But the remnant, if so it must be, will be not only in spiritual sympathy with the Church of the first days, but organically the same with it. The Church which Christ founded will not die, to be succeeded by another. She is now imperfect, in her unity, her holiness, her belief, her sense of mission. Then she will be perfect. But perfect and imperfect she is the same. "That Church which now contains an ad-

mixture of bad men," so the African Catholics maintained against the Donatists, "is not different from the kingdom of God where there will be no such mixture. It is one and the same Holy Church, existing in one condition now, and in another condition hereafter."

Chapter IX.

The Means of Grace.

Object of the Means of Grace at once Social and Individual—The Word of God—Fundamental Principle of the Sacraments—Their Number—Baptismal Incorporation into Christ—Washing away of Sin—Regeneration—Baptism of Infants—Administration of this Sacrament—Confirmation—Mode of administering it—Christ our Support the underlying Idea of the Eucharist—Doctrine of the Real Presence—Christ's Body—Christ's Blood—The Eucharistic Sacrifice—Christian Prayer—Absolution—Unction of the Sick—Holy Orders—Marriage.

§ 1.

The connecting point between the Church and the individual Christian is in the means of grace appointed by Christ and employed by the Holy Ghost. A twofold work is effected by them. They are at once the means by which the Church is extended and consolidated, and also the means by which souls are made partakers of the benefits procured for them by the meritorious work of Christ. It is plain from such an arrangement of Divine wisdom that these two ends are not to be separated from each other, nor is the one of greater importance than the other. In Christianity the single soul is at once everything and nothing. On the one hand it is only to be valued in so far as it

serves to augment the kingdom of God, and contributes some special gift to the riches and fulness of the Christian commonwealth. Yet on the other hand, the Church herself would be a mere name, an abstract and barren idea, but for the single souls which compose her. Though she is a living thing, and not a piece of formal machinery fitted up for the salvation of souls, yet her very life depends upon the performance of the saving task, and she only gains true existence as the Bride of Christ by actually bringing men forth, and becoming "the Mother of all living" to the New Adam (Gen. iii. 20; Gal. iv. 26).

§ 2.

First amongst the appointed means of grace comes the preaching of the Word of God. The instinct of the Church has led her not to class preaching among the Sacraments, although there would be much reason for doing so. It was distinctly ordained by Christ Himself. "Preach the Gospel," He said, "to the whole creation" (S. Mark xvi. 15). The exterior form in which it is clothed, though not addressed to sight or touch, is addressed to hearing, so that the body also has share in it, as in other sacraments. And it cannot be doubted that there is a truly sacramental grace and power in preaching. The words are not mere words, but vehicles of something beyond words. Christ says, "The sayings that I have spoken unto you are spirit and are life" (S. John vi. 63). Speech altogether is a great mystery; and no one can pretend to understand or measure the power exerted by mind upon mind by

means of vibrations of sound, imparting ideas which alter the whole career and character of a man, for good or for evil. Christianity has not overlooked so mighty a force. If preaching is not reckoned among the Sacraments, but parallel with them, it is because it is more, not less, than a sacrament. The gift conveyed through it, indeed, may not be greater, but it more immediately influences the springs of thought and will. Indeed, there is a sense in which all the Sacraments depend for their efficacy upon preaching. Without faith, they are received in vain; and "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God" (Rom. x. 17). And while there are other ways by which the Word of God can find an entrance into men's hearts, besides the public preaching in the congregation,—as for instance through the reading of books, or the conversation of religious friends,—yet there is a special power in the solemn and authoritative utterance of the living voice in the Church. It stands related to the private modes of instruction, as the united prayer of the Church stands to private devotion. A blessing rests on either; but the former may claim the promise of a peculiar presence of Christ (S. Matt. xviii. 20).

No doubt another reason why the preaching of the Gospel is not considered a sacrament is because the "outward part" in it cannot possibly have a fixed and unchangeable form. There is infinite variety in the substance of the preaching, and it needs presenting in an infinite variety of ways, to suit the needs of many classes of hearers. Much more depends, in the

ministry of the Word, upon the human agent, than in other ministries. Even such adventitious gifts as eloquence and imagination modify the result produced. Still more is this the case with the more valuable inward gifts. The more deeply the preacher feels the reality of his message, the more effect will it have upon his hearers; and the power of grace is to some extent paralysed, when the word is unbelievingly or unsympathetically delivered. But however much the Spirit may be "quenched" (1 Thess. v. 19) by the minister's own unfaithfulness, or by the reaction upon him from the apathy of the congregation, all Christian preaching is an operation of the Spirit. Christ still speaks, by the Holy Ghost, wherever His appointed ambassadors, in the exercise of their lawful calling, speak in His Name. They may obscure the Gospel which they preach, by affectations, and errors, and confusions; but the Divine element is not wholly wanting, and hearers whose hearts God has touched will be able to discover it, in spite of all that overlays it. And in proportion to the minister's singleness of aim, and right conception of his office, will the Divine element come out. A self-conscious ministry, whether it takes the form of apologetic timidity or of boastful display, is a weak ministry; but a minimum of natural endowment may work wonders, if used in accordance with S. Peter's saying, "If any man speak, let him speak as an oracle of God" (1 Pet. iv. 11). The Apostle does not mean that the man is to speak what is in keeping with the Bible. He means that each person, whose business it is to speak in the

Christian Church, is called upon to be an inspired prophet of God, and ought not to be contented to be less,—like the prophets before Christ, or the prophets mentioned in the Acts. He has but to put his faculties at the disposal of the Holy Ghost, and to exert them faithfully and humbly under His guidance, —and he will be an oracle indeed.

Like every other ordinance in the Church, the ministry of the Word, to be fruitful, needs to be received in faith, and reflected upon in after-thought. "A forgetful hearer" (S. James i. 25) carries away no benefit, however plentiful the outpouring of grace may have been at the time of hearing. Hence the Church, even at times when it has timorously kept the written Bible out of the hands of people in general, has always encouraged the practice of meditation, or pondering upon the verities of the Gospel. A close connexion exists between the public ministry of the Word, and private reading and meditating upon it. The public preaching gives guidance and vitality to the private exercise, and a faithful use of the private exercise qualifies the Christian to receive the spoken message with increasing intelligence and appreciation.

§ 3.

The principle on which all Sacraments are based lies deep in the very heart of the Christian faith. It is not a superficial detail, which may be safely neglected. It has its root in nothing less fundamental than the relation which subsists from the beginning between creation and the Word, or even in the nature

of the Word Himself. That title of the Divine Son suggests at once that the fulness of God has the tendency to express itself in an objective form. We have already seen that the existence of the Son with the Father was eternally a prophecy and pledge of creation, and that when creation is launched forth to what we may call its furthest point from God, there is still within it an immanent presence of the Word, which by successive stages draws it again towards the Author of its being, until the moment arrives when the Word Himself stands in the midst of the world which was made through Him, visible and tangible, wholly expressed, and fully revealing the nature of God, in a body fashioned out of our own earthly substance. The Incarnation was itself, in the language of the Fathers, a Sacrament. It linked, by no fantastic or unreal or conventional union, the Divine life to a material form. The Word was made flesh. And so far from the union thus effected being severed by the Ascension, it was extended and completed. Christ "ascended far above all heavens," not in order to be as far as possible removed from the world, but "that He might fill all things" (Eph. iv. 10), uniting, by His own living contact with both, the height beyond all height to which He rose, with "the earth's lower regions" (Eph. iv. 9) to which He had come down. In His Incarnate Person is now focussed and concentrated the fulness not only of the Godhead, but of creation. Jesus Christ is in living connexion with every part of it.

An immense advance is thus gained for our religion upon the religion of the Jews. Theirs, like ours, was

a religion of symbolism. But with them, the symbol was a symbol and nothing more. A certain resemblance may be found between their circumcision and our Baptism, between their sacrifices and our Eucharist; but the difference is more profoundly significant than the resemblance. To them, the inner import of the prescribed action was a lesson which might be learned, not a gift which might be apprehended. Circumcision, for instance, taught the Jews, in a striking figure, that the only way to enter into covenant with a holy God was to put away, even at the price of pain and blood, the corrupt desires of our fallen hearts; but it offered no help towards putting those desires away. The sacrifices, in a multitude of instructive details, pointed on to One who would be able to take away sin, and restore communion between man and God; but they took no sins away, and the man had no actual communion with God by eating of the offering. Yet by such ordinances the principle of symbolism was consecrated, and prepared for a higher use. Now, since the glorification of Christ, and the outpouring of His Spirit, we are presented with signs which not only speak of spiritual mysteries, but convey the things which they speak of. Otherwise, the institution of external rites would be unworthy of Christ. His religion is a spiritual religion,—a religion of grace, and not of law. It would have been a retrogression,—the reintroduction of a modified Judaism,—if Christ, amidst all His high spiritual doctrines, had imposed as an obligation on His Church one or two symbolical acts by which men's

souls would not be enriched, except so far as it enriches the soul to profess obedience to His precepts and to keep alive its sense of obligation to Him. If such be our view of the Sacraments, we might do well to follow the Quakers, and to abjure the outward symbol as a piece of mistaken literalism. There is nothing between the position of the Quakers and that of Catholics which makes Christ consistent with Himself. If the Sacraments were what Zwingli made them, they would not be Christian. Christ could not have devised what the Article calls "only badges or tokens of Christian men's profession." If the Sacraments are His, we may be sure that "they be certain sure witnesses, and effectual signs of grace and God's goodwill towards us, by the which He doth work invisibly in us, and doth not only quicken, but also strengthen and confirm our faith in Him."

The last-quoted words in the Article bring out one merciful aspect of the Sacraments, namely, their adaptation to the needs of weak faith. Even if heroic souls could get on without them, the common run of Christians may be grateful for not being permitted to lose blessings by a too universal diffusion of them. A gift to be had anywhere would by most of us be found nowhere. It is a mercy that we are shown where, and when, and how, the spiritual gifts we most need, may be with absolute certainty appropriated by every one for himself. For this very reason it is most important that we should not so interpret the promises which Christ attached to the Sacraments as to make the reality of the grace there offered depend upon the

faith of the worshippers. It is acknowledged on all hands that the measure of grace actually imbibed and taken into the spiritual system is proportioned to the receiver's faith,—that the ill-disposed gains no good, but only harm, from the use of the means of grace,—that the man whose faith is strong and lively gets more out of them than the man whose faith is inert and half-hearted. But the benefits received are not necessarily the same as the benefits offered. It is not the worshipper's business to create or conjure up a gift which is not there. He has but to take, and use to the best advantage, a gift which is there. We rely upon the honour of Christ to be ready in waiting for us with all that He has engaged Himself to give, and not to hang back until He sees how much faith we bring to meet Him. Nothing could be more daunting to those of weak faith than to imagine that it rests with them not only to receive the grace when there, but in some sense to bring it there also.

But, in fact, the Sacraments are not merely an accommodation to the needs of the weak, unless the Incarnation itself is to be so regarded. That is a notion which we cannot entertain. Christ did not come in the flesh simply because it made it easier for ordinary men to believe in what He did for them. He came to unite heaven and earth, and to raise the nature which He assumed. In pursuance of the same design He instituted His Sacraments. By them He brings out the true dignity of the visible creation, and still further glorifies it. He not only teaches that the material and corporeal *can* be made a basis and

vehicle for the spiritual, but He actually makes it so. It does not satisfy the conception of a Sacrament, when seen by the light of the Incarnation, to say that the sacramental action typifies in the external order a spiritual process taking place *pari passu* in the unseen. To think so would be to apply to the Sacraments the principle on which Nestorius went in speaking of the Person of Jesus. Neither ought we to fall into an opposite error, analogous to Eutychianism, and confound the outward and the inward. The Sacrament is never the same thing as that of which it is the sacrament. But the inward and the outward are wedded together in a vital union. We find the spiritual grace actually embodied and presented to us in the action or the element which symbolizes it. It is lodged there. It pleases Christ not merely to give covenanted graces along with the faithful performance of prescribed ceremonies, but to make the ceremonies quite literally the means of grace, and to charge with His own fulness the thing which His Church uses or does. In such a sublime consciousness of the living unity of the outward and the inward, S. Paul, for instance, does not scruple to say to Timothy, "I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee through the imposition of my hands" (2 Tim. i. 6).

Thus the Sacraments are the beginning of the fulfilment of that yearning which Pantheism expresses and distorts. God and the world are not identical, nor ever will be; but God, through the Incarnation of His Word, is drawing all things into Himself.

"Heaven and earth are full of His glory" even now. Every portion of His creation is a concrete manifestation of some fragment of Divine thought, and ought to impress the Christian observer with the sense that he is on holy ground. All nature, it has been said, is sacramental. By the selection of representative materials like water and bread, to be set apart for purposes of stupendous import, Christ emphasizes this thought and gives it point. He thereby hallows all natural substances, as, by the appointment of selected holy days, He consecrates all our time. That greatest of early doctors upon sacramental subjects, S. Irenæus, fresh from the traditions of S. John, insists with peculiar emphasis upon this line of thought, which was made the more significant to him by the Gnostic disparagement of matter. To him, the Eucharistic Offering is the offering to God of "firstfruits from His creatures"—and that, not as a separate purpose independent of its being the offering of Christ's Body, but in consequence of its being so. He dwells again and again upon the action of the Word in nature, as preparing nature to serve the purposes of grace. "Since we are members of Him," he says, "and are nourished by the creature, and He Himself provides us with the creature, making His sun to rise, and raining according to His pleasure, He confessed the cup, which the creature supplies, to be His own Blood, with which He infuses our blood, and asseverated the bread supplied by the creature to be His own Body, by which He augments our bodies." It is the vindication of the sanctity of matter,—the condemnation of that false

spirituality which sees no value in anything which is not simply spiritual. S. Irenæus is right when he connects the doctrine of the Sacraments with the resurrection of the body, as well as with the Incarnation of the Word and with the creation and development of the world through the Word.

§ 4.

It is a matter of small moment how many sacred rites we include under the title of Sacraments. Among the Fathers, the word is very loosely used. When they enumerate at all, some speak of two Sacraments, some of three, some of four. With the advance of time the perfect number of seven came to be generally recognised. It depends entirely upon the definition; and as the word is not one taken from Scripture, where its precise significance could be ascertained and must be preserved, the Church is at liberty to define it as she pleases. Nevertheless it is a misfortune that new significations should be put upon terms of long ecclesiastical standing; and the question whether, for instance, marriage is a sacrament, ought never to divide the Church. Clearly the Articles of the English Church intend to suggest an inner distinction among the Sacraments, when they speak carefully of two "Sacraments of the Gospel," as marked off from "five, commonly called Sacraments," which "yet have not like nature of Sacraments with Baptism and the Lord's Supper." And it is to be observed that the Catechism only professes to deal with those Sacraments which "Christ ordained in His

Church;" it does not deny that there are others, although no others are "generally necessary to salvation"—that is, necessary for all men alike,—or, as others interpret the phrase, necessary according to their kind,—"of necessity where they may be had." Those two are generally necessary, inasmuch as without them there is no admission into the Church and no active membership in it; and there is no pledged salvation outside of the Church. The others are properly put on a somewhat different level, because they are ancillary to these. Penance, for instance, is the continued application of a gift already conferred once for all in Baptism. Confirmation is practically one Sacrament with Baptism, completing what Baptism begins. Orders is a special development of the grace given in Confirmation; and so, perhaps, is the Unction of the Sick. Marriage is not an exclusively Christian institution, though it receives special honour and grace in the bosom of the Church. Thus there is clearly a difference of importance between Baptism (as completed by Confirmation) and the Eucharist on the one hand, and the rest of the Sacraments on the other. But if we are jealous for the dignity of the two great Sacraments, it is not because we hold the others cheap. There is a world of difference between them and those edifying ceremonies in which the Church abounds, but to which she does not attach the idea of grace. For example, it has long been the custom to marry people with a ring for "token and pledge;" but the Church would condemn it as a profane superstition to suppose that the grace of marriage is

conveyed by the ring. Sacred symbolism clusters round all the Sacraments, which are themselves Divinely appointed symbols; but there is no confusion between those acts which are means of grace, and those which are only impressive parables.

§ 5.

Union with our Lord Jesus Christ is the first thing absolutely necessary to salvation. There could hardly be a greater departure from Scriptural Christianity than is shewn on this point in much of the popular teaching of the day. According to this modern Gospel, union with Christ would appear not to be the soul's starting-point in its new career of development, but a reward to be attained when the soul has made good Christian progress. When we have been justified by faith in Him, and have lived for some time in accordance with our faith, we may then, it is implied, expect to be drawn into vital union with Christ. This is an inversion of the true order. None of the characteristic blessings of the Gospel,—whether justification, or sanctification, or Divine knowledge, or eternal life, or any other,—are promised to any except "in Christ." A measure of repentance and of faith can be given to us before we are united to Him. We may have a true conversion of heart while still external to Him. But these gifts are not the special gifts of the Gospel. They were enjoyed under the Law as well. They were the chief features in the work of John the Baptist. To become partakers of Christ's righteousness, to receive His merits, we need something more

than to stand at a distance and believe. The type of the Brazen Serpent, with all its wonderful teaching, is, after all, but a partial type. It must be supplemented by such rich statements as these, which abound in the New Testament, "Him that never knew sin, on our behalf He made to be sin, that we may become Divine righteousness in Him" (2 Cor. v. 21). "Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ" (Rom. iii. 24). "In whom we have our redemption through His Blood, even the remission of our sins" (Eph. i. 7). "Seeking to be justified in Christ" (Gal. ii. 17). We do not receive these things first, and then become one with Him. It is in Him alone that we gain them. We first taste these privileges when we begin to realise that we have already been made to share in the life of Christ Himself.

Without faith on our part, our union with Christ remains inoperative, but our faith does not constitute the union. Faith is needed to make the union reciprocal, fruitful in all those good things for which the union is established; but faith, by itself, would be incompetent to put us into that union. It is the act of Christ Himself, not ours.

Admission into Christ is the great gift of Baptism. All Christians are agreed that Baptism is the act by which we are visibly incorporated into the historical Church. But if the historical Church is what we have already seen it to be, in no merely figurative sense the Body of Christ, then incorporation into it must carry the blessing of membership in Christ. And this is in

fact the constant doctrine of Scripture. S. Paul speaks twice of being "baptized into Christ" (Rom. vi. 3; Gal. iii. 27). His language must not be explained away by paraphrases, as if it were equivalent to being baptized into the Christian religion, or into the Christian covenant. It is true that he once also speaks of being "baptized into Moses" (1 Cor. x. 2), which might seem to justify such paraphrases. But the Apostle is there expressly comparing the two dispensations, and for that purpose transfers to Moses the language properly applicable only to Christ. He never uses expressions concerning Moses such as he elsewhere heaps up about Christ,—"members of Christ," "in Christ," "holding the Head, even Christ," "Christ liveth in me." Evidently, to the mind of S. Paul, inspired by the Holy Ghost, union with Christ was infinitely more than a metaphor. It did not mean to him an agreement with the principles of Christ, or sympathetic intercourse with His Person. It meant, literally, a participation in His very self. The Christian was annexed to Him. Christ's own life overflowed him, and took him in, and extended itself by embracing him. And there was a definite moment when this began to be the case. It was the moment of Baptism. Till then, the believer was still being acted upon from without. By that Sacrament, he passed into a new relationship to his Saviour, like a branch grafted into the vine. He was no longer without, but within.

§ 6.

Two main blessings flow to the soul as a direct consequence from this admission into union with Christ. Of these, the most universally recognised is the Remission of Sins. The Nicene Creed explicitly, in the words of Scripture, connects it with Baptism. The Apostles' Creed does so by implication, when it names the forgiveness of sins as the first consequence of membership in the Holy Catholic Church. It is implied in the very symbolism of the Sacrament. Baptism is a washing. By the outward application of the cleansing element is typified the inward ablution of the man's moral self which accompanies it. Probably this was present to our Lord's mind when He spoke to Nicodemus of being "born of water and spirit" (S. John iii. 5). The mention of "water" would doubtless recall to His hearer the penitential rite by which John was preparing men for the kingdom of God. At the same time, it would, especially when contrasted with "spirit," raise the thought not only of the outward element, but of all that the outward element meant. By being "born of water" our Lord seems to have pointed to the cleansing operation of the Holy Ghost, as distinct from the life-giving operation spoken of as being "born of spirit." The symbolism of the use of water is the same in Christian Baptism as in that of John. In both, it is the sinner's confession of guilt, and demand for a purification of conscience (the probable meaning of 1 Pet. iii. 21). But one great difference between John's baptism and ours

is this,—that while his penitents had to wait for their inward washing until He should come to whom S. John pointed them, we receive our inward washing at once, by means of the outward. John, in the very act of baptizing, confessed the inadequacy of his rite; but no sooner was the Atonement of Christ completed and the Holy Ghost come, than the effectual power was added to the significant ceremony, and S. Peter could point convicted consciences to it with unfaltering assurance: "Repent, and let each one of you be baptized in the Name of Jesus Christ into the remission of your sins" (Acts ii. 38). Conviction, contrition, conversion, did not of themselves remove the burden and stain of guilt, but the Baptism to which these led. Thus the man who was sent by our Lord Himself to the converted Saul, to instruct him in "all the things which were appointed for him to do," deals with him as still not cleansed, and shows him the way to obtain the cleansing: "Now, why tarriest thou? arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins, calling upon His Name" (Acts xxii. 16).

All sin alike is washed away in Baptism, both original and actual. The soul which rightly receives the washing is no longer an object of displeasure and wrath to the holy eyes of God; because all the guilt which made it so is removed by the passing into union with Christ. Nor is the washing to be considered as only retrospective. Under that mistaken notion,—combined with a right sense of the increased heinousness of sin after Baptism,—it was a frequent thing in early centuries to defer the Sacrament to advancing

life, or to the death-bed. Such a practice not only ignored the second and still greater gift of Baptism, by which we are qualified for a holy life as well as for a peaceful death; it ignored the *eternal* character of union with Christ,—what is called in the Prayer-book "the everlasting benediction of God's heavenly washing." Currents catch us which are above and beyond time. Our inmost selves are dealt with, not simply the succession of our acts. The baptized man is not barely forgiven up to that point, but is transplanted into a region of forgiveness in Christ. Thenceforth, unless he wilfully banishes himself from it again, he lives and moves in it. He is not indeed guaranteed never to sin again; and his sins for the future are more and more inexcusable, in proportion as he drinks more deeply of the experience of life in Christ. But not every sin cuts him off from union with Christ. Though his sins may weaken the union, yet by penitence and faith he will be preserved from falling altogether away. God has provided His Church with means to keep always fresh the baptismal absolution, without any repetition of the baptismal act. Indeed, there are few things which the Church regards with such horror as the thought of a repetition of Baptism. Even in this sense there is "*one* Baptism for the remission of sins." We cannot pass backwards and forwards in and out of the sacred sphere into which we have been brought. Either we are in Christ, or we are not. If we are not (after being once baptized), then nothing can put us back in Him. If we are, then, though for our sins we may

worthily deserve to be punished, we are at least within reach of forgiveness. It is still ours, if we will put forth our hands and take it.

§ 7.

Forgiveness is the primary need of a guilty being, and any further gift, if it could be bestowed upon one under condemnation, would be to such a one a mockery. Nevertheless the baptismal union with Christ brings with it a blessing out of all proportion greater than forgiveness of sins. We could imagine a guilty person receiving a free pardon, and yet not raised above his original position. This is not what is done with us. Baptism is to us not only a laver, but a "laver of Regeneration" (Tit. iii. 5). The connexion between the two things is very close. They are not companions by accident. According to the pregnant phrase of the Prayer-book, we "receive remission of sins *by* spiritual regeneration." It might otherwise have seemed as if the order could be reversed, and the man might be said to be born again because he is forgiven, and so starts fair on a future unprejudiced by his past, a new man. But that is not enough. The union with Christ which he has received conveys forgiveness as a kind of inseparable consequence, because it conveys to him a new and higher form of life. We need forgiveness, because we are fallen; but Regeneration places us on a higher level than that of our unfallen innocence. Adam in Paradise had no such glory as is made ours in Baptism. The Incarna-

tion of the Son of God has done far more for us than the taking away of our sins. It has made us "partakers of a nature which is Divine" (2 Pet. i. 4). "He was made man," says S. Athanasius, "that we might be made Gods." It is in Baptism that we are made so, through incorporation into the sacred humanity of Christ.

This is to be understood whenever we are said to be made in our Baptism children of God. Devout thinkers like Frederick Denison Maurice felt the difficulty of such language, because it seemed to deny that we were the children of God before. It does not really deny it, however. All men are children of God, in one sense, by virtue of their humanity; and though they are justly banished from the filial privileges in consequence of their sins, they still retain a natural kinship with the Divine. But in Baptism we receive, by membership in the Incarnate Son, a new kind of filiation altogether, in comparison with which the unbaptized might rightly be said not to be children of God. It is for this reason that we are said to be "adopted" (Eph. i. 5),—which indicates, not the restoration of forfeited rights, but special admission to rights of sonship beyond anything which nature could have claimed. Our adoption does not give us only the privilege of free and bold access to our Heavenly Father; it brings us into a position where we ourselves are made partakers of Christ's own sonship. What He is by nature, we are made by grace, in Him. It is not by His taking our nature, but by our receiving His in consequence, that He

becomes "the Firstborn among many brethren" (Rom. viii. 29).

We are far from fully grasping the Scripture doctrine of regeneration if we consider it to mean a change in a man's moral attitude or character. When S. John says that "every one that doeth righteousness hath been begotten of God" (1 John ii. 29), it is evident from the context that he does not mean simply to identify moral rectitude with the regenerate life. He is applying a test within the Church, not to Christians and others indiscriminately. Righteousness, love, and the like, when seen among Christians, are, in his eyes, good proof that their regeneration has been successful; but they do not constitute regeneration. The idea that regeneration was synonymous with conversion was, no doubt, in the mind of Nicodemus, when he suggested that without an actual return to infancy a man in years could never take a really fresh start. But his Divine Teacher meant something more profound. However often a man might be "born again" in Nicodemus's sense, his nature would not be essentially altered. It might be purified and elevated, but it would still be "flesh." Our Lord had come to introduce an entirely new element, unattainable by any natural process. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit" (S. John iii. 6). Flesh may attain a magnificent nobility of character, a sanctity which can hardly be surpassed even in Christianity. It did so in the case of S. John the Baptist. Our Lord takes him as the highest type of

humanity as it then existed. But He says that S. John, after all, was but of the natural order, "a woman-born thing" (S. Matt. xi. 11). The least in the new order should be—not better,—but greater than he,—higher in the scale of being, because partaking, not only of human nature at its highest, but of the Divine.

Baptism is, accordingly, a means whereby the Incarnation of Christ is successively extended to one human being after another. In each baptized person there is something which may be compared to the union of the two natures in Him. He indeed is a Divine Person who has assumed from us the whole of human nature, while we are human persons who through His humanity have received a portion of the Divine. He, by virtue of His Divine personality, was incapable of sin; and we, because we are still human first, remain liable to it. But in spite of these and other profound differences, we, like Him, are composite beings; we have two natures, though each of them only in measure, under one person; and as He vouchsafed in His Incarnation to become "a Man," so we, by being baptized into Him, become—as He said even of those "to whom the word of God came" under the old dispensation—"Gods" (S. John x. 35). It requires the eye of faith, however, to discern it. When we are true to our regeneration, the effect is perceptible even to unbelief; but unbelief does not understand the cause. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but thou knowest not whence it cometh and whither it goeth; so is every one that hath been born of the Spirit"

(S. John iii. 8). So it was in the earthly life of Jesus and so it is in ours. "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath given us, that we should be called, and are, children of God! For this cause the world knoweth not us, because it knew not Him" (1 John iii. 1).

§ 8.

All ages are suitable for Baptism; none more so than infancy. Regarding Baptism as a cleansing, we cannot think it superfluous for infants, inasmuch as the human heart from the outset contains the germs of sin, however undeveloped. Nor can we suppose that infancy is incapable of receiving grace, or our Lord would not have blessed the infants which were brought to Him. It might be difficult to think of infants receiving some other forms of grace, but not the grace of regeneration. Life, by its very nature, comes as an absolute gift, not by the choice of the recipient. The grown up man, indeed, may ask to be baptized and the new life be granted him; but on the other hand it is difficult to see how he could refuse it, if it were thrust upon him. If he chooses, he may speedily destroy it out of his soul; but he has had it, even though but for a moment. Certainly the intellectual neutrality of an infant's mind towards the gift can form no obstacle to its entrance. Even in later life it holds good as a general law that the sacramental gifts of God are in advance of our understanding, and He can say of them all, what He said of one, "What I am doing, thou knowest not now, but

shalt perceive hereafter" (S. John xiii. 7). And in that case, the sooner it is received the better. Christ considered the praise which came "out of the mouths of babes and sucklings," to be the perfection of praise (S. Matt. xxi. 16), and, with indignant repudiation of the contrary opinion, claimed the little children as peculiarly fitted to be the subjects,—or possessors,—of His kingdom of grace (S. Mark x. 14). It was significantly pointed out by S. Irenæus that the sacred infancy of Jesus Himself proved His desire to lay hold upon human life not only in its later, and sadder, and more self-conscious stages, but from first to last. "He sanctified every age by passing through the like; for He came to save all men through Himself; all, that is to say, who through Him are born again unto God, infants, and young children, and boys, and young men, and elders. Therefore He went through every age, and was made for infants an Infant, sanctifying the infants; among young children, a young Child, sanctifying those of that age likewise, and being made also to them an example of affection and good principle and obedience; among young men, a young Man, becoming an example to young men and sanctifying them to the Lord; and so also among elders, an Elder."

Mindful of the warning of our Lord, not to "give that which is holy to the dogs" (S. Matt. vii. 6), the Church as a rule refuses Baptism to those who have no sponsors. It is the part of the sponsors to give security to the Church that the candidates are properly qualified and likely to make good use of the

grace bestowed, and also to see to it that they do so, as far as they reasonably can.

§ 9.

The proper minister of this Sacrament is the priest; but, in his absence, a deacon is permitted to give it. Indeed, as so much more depends upon admission into union with Christ than upon any subsequent gift, it has always been held lawful, in an emergency, for a layman, or even a woman, to baptize. Furthermore, the Sacrament is held to be valid even if the person who administers it be a heretic or a schismatic. So long as he uses water, and the sacred formula, he baptizes, not into his own sect, but into the Catholic Church. If it were desired to make a person by Baptism a member of a sect, it would be necessary to introduce the name of the sect into the formula,—in which case it would cease to be Christian Baptism. Unless there is genuine doubt whether the right words and the right element were used, conditional Baptism ought not to be resorted to in receiving into the Church those who have been baptized elsewhere. Any irregularity in the Baptism was thought in ancient times to be covered by the Laying on of Hands. How much of the body is touched by the sacramental element makes no difference to the effect of Baptism; but immersion is the normal and most instructive mode of baptism. The Church of England allows Baptism by affusion, but does not sanction Baptism by aspersion, or sprinkling.

§ 10.

Confirmation ought not to be regarded as a separate Sacrament, but as the second part of the one Sacrament of Baptism. It is only a separate Sacrament in the same kind of way as the Eucharistic Chalice might be called a separate Sacrament from the Eucharistic Bread. Christ Himself instituted it, when He said, "Make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost" (S. Matt. xxviii. 19). Only part of the baptismal grace is bestowed, when the baptized stops short of Confirmation. So S. Peter understood, when he promised to those who, on repentance, were baptized into the remission of sins, that they should "receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts ii. 38). So S. Paul understood, when, on discovering the ignorance of some at Ephesus with regard to that gift, he asked in astonishment, "Into what then were ye baptized?" (Acts xix. 3). From this close connexion between the two acts the distinctive gift of Confirmation is frequently attributed, both in Scripture and in early Fathers, to Baptism. It was not that the gift was considered to be conveyed by the baptismal water itself, but that the name of Baptism covered the Laying on of Hands as well,—even as the Breaking of the Bread covered also the participation of the Cup. When circumstances forced the separation of the two parts of the Sacrament, the distinction between them was recognised clearly enough. "They prayed for them, with a view to their receiving the

Holy Ghost; for as yet He was fallen upon none of them, but they were only in the position of having been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid their hands upon them, and they received the Holy Ghost" (Acts viii. 15–17). While this passage shews unmistakably that the gift of the Holy Ghost was associated with the Laying on of Hands, not with the baptismal Water, the word "only" shews no less unmistakably that Baptism was considered incomplete without it.

All operations of Christ in His Church are performed through the Holy Ghost, and assuredly the act by which we are made a "new creation" is no exception. But to be born of the Spirit is not the same thing as to receive the Spirit. Baptism is related to Confirmation as the breathing of our Lord upon His disciples on the evening of His resurrection was related to the outpouring of Pentecost. If ever the Church speaks of the Holy Ghost being given in Baptism, apart from Confirmation, she expressly defines the extent of the gift: "Give Thy Holy Spirit to this infant that he may be born again." It would have been inaccurate to ask for the gift without that limitation. Strict theology, following the language of Scripture, connects such terms as giving, and receiving, and having the Spirit, the Spirit falling on a man, and dwelling in him, and making him His temple, and being shed abroad in his heart, sealing, and anointing him, with Confirmation, not with Baptism by itself. We are quickened into new and eternal and Divine life by the first act which ushers

us into the Body of Christ; the rudiments of new faculties are imparted to us, which are called "the powers of the world to come" (Heb. vi. 5); we begin at once to be subject to heavenly motions from the Holy Ghost, such as the unbaptized cannot be said to experience; but not immediately does the Spirit of Christ take possession of us and flood our inward selves with His penetrating presence. Even Christ Himself, whose Nativity in some degree corresponded to our regeneration, did not receive the complete unction of the Spirit till many years later.

Ill-instructed Christians often suppose that the gift of the Holy Ghost, which was at first bestowed by the laying on of hands, consisted in the power to speak with tongues and prophesy, or to work miracles, because we sometimes read that the first effect of the gift was to make the recipients break forth into such actions. Or if it is recognised that a gift of which so much is made could not be of so superficial and poor a nature, men suppose that to receive the Holy Ghost must necessarily involve becoming holy. But this is to confuse the gift with its effects. Startling results at first accompanied the reception of the gift, in order to convince the recipients and others of the reality of what was given. These results are no longer produced, because we believe without them. The absence of miracles and tongues does not make us doubt the presence of the Holy Ghost. Even an evil life is no proof that the Holy Ghost is not there. S. Paul expressly rebukes the Corinthians for living profligate lives while they knew, all the time, that the

Holy Ghost was within them (1 Cor. vi. 19). It only shews that the gift, though received, has been thus far received in vain. No gift of God takes away the man's responsibility for using it rightly, and it is quite possible for the Holy Ghost to lie in a man's heart without effect. The simplest account of this matter is really the truest. What we receive in Confirmation is not an operation or influence of God, but the living and personal Spirit Himself. He enters into a new relation with us thereby, and lodges Himself close by the springs of our thought and desire, to make of us what we will allow Him to make.

Behind all special manifestations of His grace lie the great universally needed gifts. Of these, seven are usually enumerated, all of which are forms of enlightened spiritual and moral consciousness. By this inward teaching, which not only sets the truth before us as an object, but quickens our own faculties to perceive it, the Holy Ghost sanctifies us. The sevenfold gifts should bear fruit in a company of virtues, the various grouping of which in different souls makes the difference of character, and exhibits the manifold artistic skill of the indwelling Spirit. "To every man severally as He wills" (1 Cor. xii. 11), He divides the particular grace appropriate to the man himself and to his function in the society. Those individualising features of grace are sometimes called *charismata*, or bounties in a definite shape. No man who has been confirmed is without some *charisma*, which becomes his contribution to the general wealth of the Church.

Confirmation is often called a Sealing. In all probability this is on account of its relation to Holy Baptism. Sealing is not a first but a second act; and in Confirmation God's seal is set to what has already been done. It is the "Amen" to the already uttered "Yea" (2 Cor. i. 20–22). But it is more than the ratification of an act; it is the sealing of persons (Eph. iv. 30). We ourselves are thereby indelibly marked as being God's own by a special consecration. That consecration is set forth also under the figure of Unction, because in Confirmation we, in our degree, are consecrated to the same kind of office as our Lord Himself, to be prophets and priests and kings in the world, under Him.

§ 11.

It is a pity that the prominence anciently given to this last thought has been lost in the English Church by discontinuing the use of oil in Confirmation. Nevertheless the laying on of hands is certainly an apostolic way of administering the Spirit, and it is not clear that the actual use of oil accompanied the imposition in the very first days, although it soon came to be regarded as an integral part of the Sacrament. We are therefore in at least as good a position with regard to this ordinance as some other ancient Churches, which have retained unction but have lost the laying on of hands.

This ministration belongs exclusively to the first order in the Church. Following the precedent of apostolic days (Acts viii. 14), the Church permits none

but bishops to confirm, although local usage has sometimes varied upon the point. In the Eastern Church, where unction alone is used, the priest is permitted to confirm, but only with oil specially prepared by the bishop.

While the East also administers the rite to infants along with Baptism, the West, by an important stretch of authority, separates it from Baptism in the case of infants, and defers it till the recipient has "come to years of discretion." Confirmation is then wisely preceded by a previous examination of the candidate touching his baptismal vows, to make sure of his being duly qualified to receive so great a gift. None are admitted, in ordinary circumstances, to Communion until they have been confirmed, because, as S. Basil says, "The man who comes to the Communion without understanding the principle on which the participation of the Lord's Body and Blood is given, derives no benefit from it." The saint is not indeed giving this as a reason for the priority of Confirmation; but as that which is Christ's can only be shewn to us by the Spirit, who alone searches the depths of God, it is natural that we should first seek the Spirit's enlightenment before we approach so deep a mystery as the Sacrament of the Altar.

§ 12.

The fundamental idea embodied in the Holy Communion is that of our perpetual dependence upon the Incarnate Lord for support. This idea is set forth in the discourses of our Lord at Capernaum, just as the

fundamental idea of Baptism is set forth in the conversation with Nicodemus. It is not enough that we have once for all been brought into life, eternal life, by Him. Our eternal life is not so made over to us in our regeneration that we become independent centres of it, thenceforth drawing only upon ourselves. We are still compelled to resort for our nutriment to the same source from which our life was originally conveyed to us, namely, Christ. The relationship in which we stand to Him, Christ compares to the relationship in which He stands to the Father. Although the Son "has life in Himself" (S. John v. 26), not merely the contingent existence of a creature, yet He tells us that even in Him that life is not independent of its sole and everlasting source: "I live because of the Father" (S. John vi. 57). And as He lives by a perpetual absorbing into Himself of the entire fulness of the Father, so we live by a perpetual absorbing into ourselves of so much of the fulness of the Son as we are capable of receiving. The life of God Himself is beyond our reach, and we cannot draw upon it directly; but it is stored for us, as in a boundless reservoir, in the person of the Son, and the Son has brought it down to us in His Incarnation, and—because we are fallen—has made a way for us to appropriate it still more surely and copiously in His Passion.

These thoughts are set forth to us under the language of eating and drinking. But it must be remembered by those who would get at the heart of the matter, that even the eating and drinking which

supports our natural life is a profound mystery, and that it proceeds from the same Creator who now uses it in the Church for a great spiritual purpose. It is not too much to say that our very constitution has been devised with a view to this great spiritual purpose, and that Christ did not merely adapt, as an afterthought, a thing which He happened to find ready to hand. Our natural constitution is such that we cannot subsist in isolation. In order to maintain life, we are compelled to eat,—that is, to take into ourselves and assimilate a substance which is not our own. We are kept in a constant union with surrounding nature. Seeds, and herbs, and animals, yield up their lives, and minister to the sustenance of ours. How it is done, science is unable to explain to us, for, as yet at least, it has no certainty what life is. How the dead material particles, which made up something else, become part of ourselves and instinct with our own life which they have gone to support, is an unexplained wonder, although so common and universal that we seldom pause to think upon it. The eating by which our bodies are kept alive is an enigma in the very framework of nature. It receives its answer in those sayings of Christ in which, in a wonderful progress, He sets forth His own relation to men. "Work for the food which abideth unto eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you; for Him the Father sealed (or solemnly consecrated to this purpose), even God." "The bread of God is that which cometh down out of heaven and giveth life to the world." "I am the bread of life."

"And the bread, moreover, which I will give, is, for the sake of the life of the world, My flesh." "Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have not life in yourselves." "As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he that eateth Me, he also shall live because of Me" (S. John vi. 27, 33, 35, 51, 53, 57).

These words were thrown out by our Lord for faith to ponder; and then, a year later, "on the same night in which He was betrayed," they were—not indeed explained, for the mystery of them was deepened—but gathered up, and put into visible form, and commended to the Church, until Christ should come again, in the institution of the most Holy Eucharist.

§ 13.

After what has been said on the nature of Sacraments in general, it will not be necessary to state that the Eucharist is no mere repetition of the ideas above set forth, only expressed in symbol instead of language. It is a symbol which actually conveys to the believer the thing symbolized. To use our Lord's own expression, we "eat Him" in this Divine mystery,—and that, not merely by devout memory and meditation, not merely by a subjective act of faith and love such as might be made at other times and places, but "verily and indeed," because He chooses in this Sacrament "verily and indeed" to bestow His own self upon us. That He

does so is the main thing which faith requires to know; and it was the wisdom of Hooker to rest upon this his famous, though insufficient, Eirenikon between contending parties of believers. Romans, Anglicans, Orientals, Lutherans, even Calvinists, all sincerely maintain that the true-hearted communicant is thereby made really, by the operation of the Holy Ghost, to partake of the living Christ. All these alike are agreed, when they speak with deliberation, that the blessing received by the faithful is no creation of their faith, no image formed within them of something which is after all not there, but a thing truly conveyed into them from without, a movement by which our Incarnate Saviour plants Himself,—His Personal self, —in our most inward parts. Where this is adoringly believed, there ought to be no insuperable hindrance to reunion. All else which we have to say upon the subject is but the working out into detail of this central truth; and it will be far better for the soul and for the Church that the detail should be forgotten and the central truth firmly held, than that there should be a clear and exhaustive understanding of the minutiæ of the doctrine, equally removed from superstition and from scepticism, without a living grasp of the personal Christ.

Yet solid unity is never reached by agreeing to inquire no further, but rather by investigating as deeply as possible in a spirit of reverence and charity, and bearing patiently with all who work in a kindred spirit, even where their present conclusions seem erroneous. In such a spirit we would point out

candidly where others appear to have gone wrong, not for the sake of controversy and criticism, but because the examination of what looks like an error is often the most effective way of coming to the truth.

The Church, then, is dissatisfied with the doctrine of the purely Spiritual Presence, as taught by the Calvinists and propagated in England (for example) by Jeremy Taylor. In its reaction from what was felt to be a carnal and materialistic view, this doctrine falls into the error of undervaluing the true connexion between the outward and the inward. It appears to forget that our Lord is not only alive from the dead, but is risen again in a glorified body, and that our own future glory is to be one not of naked spirituality, but of spirit befittingly embodied. If anything is clear in our Lord's teaching, and in the doctrine of the Incarnation in general, it is that our Lord's humanity is the medium through which men receive His Divinity, and not His Divinity the medium through which they receive His humanity. This is ignored in the Calvinistic doctrine. In its eagerness to reach that which, assuredly, is the supreme object, it dismisses with something like disdainful impatience, both the Sacrament under which our Lord is pleased to clothe His coming, and the sacred Flesh or Body, which in His own language is the special thing signified by the Sacrament; it looks only to a spiritual action upon our spirits, not to one which deals with our whole complex nature, with its bodily as well as spiritual organization. No real difference is made between the Eucharistic Presence of Christ

and the receiving of the Holy Ghost. If men of this persuasion turn aside to acknowledge that we are made partakers of Christ's sacred flesh at all, they acknowledge it only as a consequence of our having already been made partakers of the still greater gift. In this way the true notion of a Sacrament is lost, and what we have called the Nestorian notion comes in. The doctrine lacks the simplicity of Gospel faith. The connexion between the Sacrament and that of which it is the Sacrament is made purely arbitrary and conventional. The consecration of the Eucharistic elements has no other effect than to set them apart to serve as symbols in a transaction to which they are not actually necessary. All that is of real value, besides a profession of faith and a recognition of Church fellowship, is an act of inward appropriation by the communicant of an invisible grace which is, after all, only nominally attached to the sacramental elements. And if a devout enquirer should ask, what that is which lies upon the altar between the consecration and the act of communion, the answer would hardly be an *ex animo* quotation of our Lord's words, "This is My Body."

Opposed to this conception of the Eucharistic Presence, as Eutychianism is opposed to Nestorianism, stands the scholastic dogma of Transubstantiation. This, too, as the Article says, "overthroweth the nature of a Sacrament." The bread and wine, according to this theory, at the touch of that more glorious Substance which takes possession of them, pass out of existence and are lost, leaving behind

nothing but shadowy appearances of themselves, which serve to indicate the Presence of something else instead. Such a doctrine is capable of being stated in ravishing terms, and it was indeed first formulated with the best intention. It appeared to guard the true honour of the Sacrament of the Altar, to afford a clear position on which the intellect could repose, and to bring the Presence of Christ into the midst of His people in an indisputable way. But nevertheless it loses, like Eutychianism, some rich elements of truth, and so imperils the rest. Our first objection to the dogma is that it is based upon a discarded philosophy. It is questionable whether any well-instructed thinker of the present day holds the metaphysical theory of substance and accidents which it perpetuates. That theory is not itself *de fide*, even in the Roman communion, apart from the doctrine of the Eucharist. Possibly some assembly of competent scholars from that communion might be given liberty to revise the terms in which their doctrine of the Eucharist is couched, and, while preserving the essential thought which the Councils of Lateran and Trent aimed at expressing, to clothe it in formulas less crude, and therefore more in harmony with the advance of scientific knowledge, as well as with spiritual insight. Meanwhile, even if the philosophy of Transubstantiation were tenable, the miracle which would be involved in it would be unique among Divine actions. God does not usually deceive our senses; nor is it His method to annihilate what He has made, in the way that—according to the

Roman doctrine—the substance of the bread is annihilated. He treasures every atom of His universe. If indeed there were no other way of obtaining as rich and full a meaning from our Lord's words about the Sacrament, such an objection might soon be disposed of; but if the same meaning can be retained by some other method of interpretation, we shall give the greater glory to God by not discrediting our divinely given senses, and by setting a more reverent value even upon the material creation, with which God has so closely associated us. There is an alternative. Nothing binds us to accept the mediæval explanation, or evasion, of the mystery. Our Lord's words, "This is My Body," do not require us to choose between scholastic Transubstantiation and some figure of speech. The thing which we see can be something more than we see it to be. When S. Thomas bowed down before the Figure whose hands and side he was invited to handle, and cried, "My Lord and my God," he did not deny that what he was bidden to touch was a true substantial human body, nor even that it was a body composed of particles of carbon and hydrogen; but he felt that it was vitally united with something greater than itself; it was not an illusory set of "accidents" caught up to serve as the mere symbol of a Presence, but a thing which, with no fear of idolatry, he could fall down and worship, because, though he did not see the Divinity, yet what he saw was his Lord and his God. So may we feel when Christ says to us, "Take, eat; this is My Body."

The Church of England is not committed to the

opinions of any single doctor, or group of doctors, whether of the sixteenth or of any other century. Nevertheless it is a happy thing that the Providence of God has preserved for us clear evidence of the thoughts which were in the hearts of those who framed our present formularies on this subject. When our Articles were drawn up, Cheney, Bishop of Gloucester—a man who had risked his life under Mary by staying, when others fled, and opposing in his place in Convocation the doctrine of Transubstantiation,—protested strongly against that which is now the XXVIIIth Article. He disapproved of saying that in the Eucharist the Body of Christ "is given, taken, and eaten, *only* after an heavenly and spiritual manner." He proceeded to allege Guest, Bishop of Rochester, who was then absent, as feeling the same disapproval. Thereupon, Guest wrote to Cecil, "I suppose you have heard how the Bishop of Gloucester found himself grieved with the placing of this adverb, 'only,' . . . because it did take away the presence of Christ's Body in the Sacrament, and privately noted me to take his part therein, and yesterday, in my absence, more plainly vouched me for the same. Whereas, between him and me, I told him plainly that this word 'only' in the aforesaid Article did not exclude the Presence of Christ's Body from the Sacrament, but only the grossness and sensibleness in the receiving thereof; for I said unto him, though he take Christ's Body in his hand, received it with his mouth, and that corporally, naturally, really, substantially, and carnally,

as the doctors do write, yet did he not, for all that, see it, feel it, smell it, or taste it. And, therefore, I told him I would speak against him herein, and the rather because the Article was of my own penning. And yet I would not, for all that, deny anything that I had spoken for the Presence." If Bishop Guest's interpretation of his own Article may be considered to represent faithfully the teaching of the Reformed Church of England, it will be evident that Transubstantiation was not rejected because men shrank from a full belief in the Sacramental Presence. It was because the manner of the Presence had been defined in a way not only unnecessary, but liable to be painfully misunderstood. In order to protect, and preserve, and commend, the Catholic belief about the Eucharistic Presence, it was necessary to be rid of the modern definitions which had obscured it.

It is possible that in this great matter the Eastern Church may be able to mediate between the divergent utterances of the West. The Eastern Church, while accepting (at a late date) the word Transubstantiation, has never imported into it the scholastic metaphysics, with those notions of one substance going and another coming in its place, which often in Roman language suggest something more like human dexterity than the mighty works of God. Eastern theologians are careful to point out, that the word, as they use it, offers no explanation of the mode of change,—which in their judgment would be foolish and irreligious,—and that it is only used to exclude those opinions which would connect the elements with the Body and

Blood of Christ by nothing more than a link of thought, or (as in the Lutheran view) by local interpenetration. Perhaps no better general line can be taken. It accords well with the teaching of the Fathers,—among whom, amidst the widest range of expression, there may be said to be at least a consent in the doctrine of S. Justin Martyr, that the Eucharist is no longer "common bread or common drink." When the consecration is accomplished, the bread and wine do not remain simply what they were before. An unspeakable change has come upon them, by the overshadowing of the Holy Ghost. The change cannot be defined in the language of human schools. No metaphysical terms can set it forth. But those elements have been taken into a new relation to the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, even as the substance of our flesh, in the womb of the Blessed Virgin, was taken. It does not satisfy the heart to tell us that they serve a new purpose, or have a new meaning for us, or that they have undergone a virtual or even a spiritual change. This language sounds distant and cold. The change is not only spiritual; it is vital. S. Gregory of Nyssa, though in confused sentences, seems to set forth this thought, when he reminds us that our Lord, when on earth, lived by bread, and that the bread, which it pleased Him to partake of, was joined to His Body and became His Body, and that such a vital union as He then effected with the material elements in one way, He now effects in a higher way, for our benefit, in the Sacrament. "There, the grace of the Word made for itself a holy

Body, composed out of the bread which it ate, and so in a kind of way being itself bread; here, likewise, the bread, as the Apostle says, 'is sanctified by the Word of God and prayer,' not passing into the Body of the Word through eating and drinking, but being directly made what it was not before (εὐθὺς μεταποιούμενος) the Body of the Word, as it hath been said by the Word Himself, 'This is My Body.'" Thus the miracle wrought by the Holy Ghost at the Christian altar is of a kind at once more lofty and more natural than that which the mediæval schools imagined, and the Real Presence of the glorified Lord is assured to us in all its fulness without need to do violence to any of our faculties.

§ 14.

This doctrine does not involve the difficulty which has often been alleged (with more or less ignorance) against Roman teaching, namely, that Christ's Body cannot be in heaven and on earth at the same time. The objection has even found its way, by a curious history, to a place within the Prayer-book, in the so-called "Black Rubric," which was not the work of careful theologians, and which has hardly the same authority as other rubrics. Two mischievous fallacies underlie the objection as there verbally stated,—although, doubtless, the intended meaning is correct enough. Christ's Body is no longer a "natural" body after the fashion of ours. It is a "spiritual" body. And heaven is not a distant place, but a Divinely exalted state. To say, therefore, that "Christ's natural Body is in heaven" must be regarded as only a clumsy

way of saying that it has ceased to be a natural body, and has received conditions of freedom and glory which are out of the reach of our knowledge. A man who doubts whether our Lord still has a body, doubts the Christian faith; but it would be rash in the extreme for any one to transfer to that Body in its present state all that is gathered up for us in the notion of place. It is impossible to tell whether a glorified spiritual body is in local relations with anything at all, except at the will of him whose body it is. Still less can we tell with how many things at the same time it can enter into local relations,—especially in the case of Him who "fills all things" (Eph. iv. 10). If, however, the difficulty thus clumsily put be explained to mean that Christ's Body cannot be at the same time in two *states*, a heavenly and an earthly, the Church would gladly admit it. Christ's Body is in no way brought down or back from its heavenly condition when set before us in the Sacrament. It is certainly not there in such a way as to exclude it from glory in its own present condition. There it is, not as it was when Christ was living upon earth,—still less as it was when He hung dead on the Cross, but as it is at the right hand of God. In this wonderful mystery, we, who are still pilgrims here below, are permitted to feed, though with blindfolded eyes, upon that which will openly be our sustenance hereafter, the true Bread of Angels. It is a foretaste of heaven, given upon earth. He who eats it, becomes already possessed of "eternal life;" and the holy and glorified thing which is communicated to his body,

carries with it the assurance of the man's own resurrection (S. John vi. 54).

It is much to be observed that this Sacrament is not only our means of maintaining union with Christ but also of maintaining union with one another. The two things necessarily go together. There is no such thing as an attachment of isolated souls to Christ Each soul is indeed—to say the least of it—as directly and personally attached to Christ as if there were no other, and Christ is as wholly and entirely communicated to each soul as if none besides were to share the benefit. That is, no doubt, what is meant by saying that the entire Body of Christ, and all the fulness of His Person, is in each fragment of the Sacrament. But none can receive Christ as a kind of private property. We must receive Him in unity and loving fellowship, or not at all. The name of Communion itself implies this fact. When S. Paul asks, "The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the Body of Christ?" (1 Cor. x. 16) he does not mean that it is an act of communion between the soul and Christ; still less does he mean that the bread is a medium for the communication of Christ's Body (an interpretation which the Greek will not bear):—he means that it is our joint participation of the Body, our fellowship in it. That is why he refers particularly to the "breaking" of the bread. That most significant action has no reference to the breaking of Christ's Body on the Cross, for—as S. Chrysostom points out in this connexion—S. John emphatically records that it was never broken there. The breaking

of the bread is done in order that all may receive a share in one and the same whole; so that S. Paul pursues, "Because we, many as we are, are one bread,"—or rather "one loaf,"—"one body, for we all partake from that one loaf." If we may reverently conjecture, this was the thought which prompted our Lord to use at the institution of the Sacrament a different word from that which He had used at Capernaum, and to say, "This is My Body," not "This is My Flesh." His Flesh is His human nature, the principle by which He is man. It might conceivably have been imparted to a disconnected aggregate of souls. But His Body is the structural whole, the organism in which He is presented. It is of that that we all partake, and partake together. We not only receive the same substance, but we receive what forms an indissoluble unity. Thus the Eucharist is the great standing Sacrament of the Church. To take the Communion is the only known way of claiming membership in the Church. To be excommunicated is the suspension of membership. It is by no accidental concurrence of metaphors that the Eucharist is Christ's Body and the Church is Christ's Body; for the whole being of the Church is in the Eucharist. By it the Church is sustained, and filled out, and kept together. By it Christ embodies Himself in the Church for action. And when Christ offers us Himself at the holy table, saying, "This is My Body," He offers the Church also; and if we uncharitably disdain her, we cannot receive Him. However little this thought is insisted upon at the present day, it is enshrined in S. Paul's words to

the Corinthians above cited, and forms a large element in the teaching of the Fathers. "If you," says S. Austin, "are the body of Christ, and members, then the Mystery placed on the Lord's table is the Mystery of yourselves. Be what you see, and receive what you are."

The main purpose and object of the Eucharist is plainly to develope and strengthen our union with our glorified Head and with our fellow members. Great as the baptismal blessing of union with and in Christ is, we must not think of it as a finished and stationary thing. Union with Christ is progressive; and faithful communions do not only preserve the once-formed bond from being broken, but they make us more and more deeply to dwell in Christ and Christ in us. The last communion of a saint is a much greater thing than his first,—not that what he receives is substantially different, but because each good communion helps to give the next a more penetrating effect. The initial union with Christ in regeneration is irrespective of our wills; not so the development of it. That is why this Sacrament takes the form of eating; because eating expresses more than nourishment, and more than identification between the eater and his food;—eating is essentially a voluntary act. To bring out the voluntary nature of our effectual union with Himself, Christ, in the discourses at Capernaum, gradually substitutes for the ordinary word of eating (ἐσθίειν) a word which denotes the eating of dainties, the eating of one who relishes what he eats (τρώγειν). It is truly taught, therefore, that "the wicked eat not the Body

of Christ in the use of the Lord's Supper." The thing offered to them is identical with that which is offered to the faithful, but they lack both the will and the power to assimilate it. Honest faith, however rudimentary, and right intention, however weak in practice, may count on receiving the Body of Christ; but the touch of positive unbelief and contempt and disobedience profanes the Sacrament. The outraged Presence cannot and will not enter where the door of the heart is closed against it, and the impious consumer of the desecrated elements receives nothing but an earnest of wrath and woe.

§ 15.

Whenever the Holy Eucharist is treated of, it is instinctively assumed that the Sacrament of the Lord's Body is the chief thing, and the Sacrament of the precious Blood takes, as in order of administration, so in order of thought, a secondary place. It is not so audacious a departure from Christ's institution to withhold the Cup from the body of the faithful, as it would be to withhold the Bread. Undoubtedly, in ancient days, the first part of the Sacrament was sometimes administered—as to those sick and in prison—without the second. It is needless, however, to point out how different this is from the modern Roman rule. S. Paul himself disjoins the two in thought when he speaks of "eating the Bread *or* drinking the Cup of the Lord" (1 Cor. xi. 27), which has been held to imply that the one might occasionally be received without the other. If so, however,

it would naturally imply rather that the Cup might be received without the Bread, than the Bread without the Cup,—and no trace of such a custom appears to be found. The very fact of S. Paul's disjunction in language, and still more the emphatic interval which Christ at the Last Supper made between the two parts of the rite, shews that they cannot have one and the same meaning. Our Lord would not have appointed two separate acts, if the second were not to convey a distinct benefit of its own. It is reasonable to suppose that where persons are debarred, without their fault, from receiving the Sacrament of Christ's Blood, some at least of its benefits are conferred through the faithful reception of His Body; but we cannot guess what may, in the long run, be the result to a Church at large, where, on insufficient grounds, the Cup is systematically denied to the entire laity.

When, in defending a position which would be better frankly abandoned, Roman theologians teach that the Blood of Christ is already contained in the gift of His Body, they not only make the Chalice superfluous, but they pass lightly over two important truths. Their language too often suggests that our Lord's Body is still a body of "flesh and blood" in the same sense as it was on earth, although, according to S. Paul, such a body "cannot inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Cor. xv. 50). And in the second place they treat it as a matter of little moment whether the precious Blood, conceived of in this somewhat physical and material way, is received as still circulating, so to speak, in our Saviour's veins, or whether it is received

by itself, as shed forth for a beverage to the faithful. This is the very point. The gift of the Cup is not simply the gift of Christ's Blood, but of Christ's Blood "which is poured out on behalf of many" (S. Mark xiv. 24). It is a difficult thought to follow out, but one which ought to repay devout study.

The blood, according to the ancient Law,—and it may be added, according to our latest physical research —'is the life" (Deut. xii. 23); or still more strictly, it is the seat and medium of the life: "The life of the flesh is in the blood" (Lev. xvii. 11). In its course through the body, it both carries away impurities and brings into every corner those elements which repair the waste of nature. If this beneficent work of the blood ceases, the body dies. In this way the blood is truly identified with the life of the body. When, therefore, it is drained out of the body, the life goes with it. This was the significance of its sacrificial use. The blood of the victim meant, not the death of the victim, but its surrendered life. It was not considered that the life was extinguished and annihilated by slaughter, but only that it was deprived of its earthly activities and separated from the natural organism in which it had been embodied. The carcase was dead; but the blood was still alive. To have brought any portion of the dead carcase into the inner sanctuary would have seemed to the Israelites a horrible profanation; but it was the appropriate destination of the life-blood. No other reason could be assigned for the slaughter of the victim, for God has "no pleasure in the death of him that dieth"

(Ezek. xviii. 32); but He has pleasure in the humble surrender of the guilty life, which acknowledges that it has forfeited earthly existence, and presents itself absolutely to Him.

This is what our Blessed Redeemer has done for us. Once for all, in acknowledgment of the sins of man, He shed forth His Blood. The act was itself a great Sacrament, for it was the true "pouring out of His soul unto death" (Is. liii. 12), clothed in a natural and vivid symbolism, which answered to all the sacrificial types going before it, and appealed to the hearts of men for ever after. But that was not the end. The typical high-priests, when they went into the Holy of Holies, were forced to take with them "blood of others" (Heb. ix. 25), because there was no way of dislodging their own lives and presenting them. It could only be typically done. But Christ, made an High-priest for ever in His Resurrection, has passed into heaven for us, "through His own Blood" (Heb. ix. 12). He, the Victor Victim (as S. Austin calls Him), is able for ever to shew before the Father—not His death only, nor His life only—but His own indestructible life as enhanced and enriched by having once passed through death, and that a violent and voluntary death of sacrifice. We need not, we cannot, picture to ourselves the Blessed Lord, like a Jewish high-priest, sprinkling upon a heavenly mercy-seat some spiritualised substance in which His life still resides, apart from Himself. His life is lodged again and for ever in its proper organism, the glorified body. But just as the glorified Body bears

in its presentment marks (however we are to conceive of them) of slaughter (Rev. v. 6), so the very principle of the human life which animates it is profoundly modified by its glorious self-effusion upon Calvary. Thus the "Blood of Sprinkling"—sprinkled both on the mercy-seat and on us,—"which speaketh a more excellent thing than Abel" can, in thought, be singled out as a glory of the Church distinct from "Jesus, mediator of a new testament" (Heb. xii. 24). It is not, indeed, apart from His Person, but it gathers up one vast benefit to be derived from His Person. His Blood contains all the virtue of His Passion.

We see from this that the second part of the Eucharist is that which meets our peculiar need as sinners. If men had never fallen, and yet the Word had been made flesh, we can believe that something like the Sacrament of the Body might have been given, but not the Sacrament of the Blood. And so our Lord indicates in the words of institution. Over the Bread, He says nothing about suffering or sin. But He expressly connects the Cup with the "remission of sins" (S. Matt. xxvi. 28). The gift of His Body, again, stands absolutely, without parallel; it is more than the reversal of a calamity or the restitution of a forfeited blessing. The gift of His Blood is introduced by a manifest contrast with the covenant which condemned us; it is "the new Covenant in His Blood" (1 Cor. xi. 25; Ex. xxiv. 8). So the two parts of the Sacrament stand related to each other as the Incarnation and the Atonement. And in this view the order in which they come is unspeakably

suggestive. We are not first purified from our sins and then incorporated into Christ. When we have been brought into the communion of His Body, then we are in a position to receive the cleansing action of His once outpoured Blood. "We have fellowship one with another,"—if, that is, we fulfil that condition of the communicant, of "walking in the light,"—"and the Blood of Jesus cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John i. 7). Having been first raised to partake of His glorified humanity, we are then permitted to drink in those special properties of His life with which His death has charged it. And although the first gift is the wider and further-reaching, no one who has a deep sense of sin will feel that the second is superfluous or unnecessarily emphasizes the sinner's need.

§ 16.

From the earliest times the Holy Eucharist has been regarded by the Church as not only the great means by which we are permitted to draw into ourselves our glorified Lord and all His benefits, but also as her one appointed Sacrifice. So universally do the early Christians interpret Malachi's prophecy of a pure and catholic Sacrifice as referring to the Eucharist, that we cannot doubt that it was part of the Apostles' doctrine (Mal. i. 11). The word does not apply only to the praises and thanksgivings which accompany the oblation—though they form an integral portion of it, and are, indeed, so characteristic of it as to establish its name of Eucharist, or Thanksgiving. Nor does it apply only to the alms which Christians

have always been accustomed to offer with it, and which come up as a true "memorial before God" (Acts x. 4). Nor does the sacrifice consist only in the presentation of the bread and wine which are to be used in the Mysteries, though ancient liturgies invest this presentation with great solemnity. It comes closer to the point when we consider "ourselves, our souls and bodies," as the sacrifice. A hasty reading of S. Austin, for example, might almost lead to the conclusion that the saint knew of no other sacrifice in the Eucharist. He insists with vehement reiteration that the Church is herself the Body of Christ which is offered. "This," he says, "is the Christian Sacrifice: the many, one body in Christ. This the Church celebrates in the Sacrament of the Altar with which the faithful are familiar, where the Church learns that in that thing which she offers, she is herself offered." It does not explain this Father's meaning to allege that he is using allegorical or metaphorical language. What S. Austin says is a real and substantial fact, and no offering of the Body of Christ can be imagined now, which does not include the offering of all His members in their unity. But if the Body of Christ cannot be offered in sacrifice without the Church, still less can the Church be offered in sacrifice without that sacred Thing, the partaking of which makes her to be Christ's Body and renders her acceptable to God. The sacrifice of ourselves—as well as of our gifts and alms and praises—is the new and additional element in every Eucharist; but it requires some other more potent and constant Sacrifice on which to rest.

That which gives substance and value to all our other offerings is the continual offering up to God of the Person of Jesus Christ, in His Body and His Blood. Christ empowered and commanded His Apostles to do this, when He made the Eucharist His own memorial, as the yearly Passover which He was superseding by it was the "memorial" of the Exodus (Ex. xii. 14). It should be observed, however, that He did not say, "Do this for a remembrance of My Death." The Eucharist was to be connected not merely with one, even the greatest and most touching, of His acts, but with Himself. Now Christ cannot be remembered in His Church as one who is dead and gone. He can only be remembered as living and present, though out of sight; and His living Presence is guaranteed in the bread and wine which He had already affirmed to be His Body and Blood. Over those sacred elements we remember Him, truly present in them, and gathering up in Himself all that He has done for us. And what direction does our remembrance of Him take? Not merely an internal one, as in meditation. S. Paul speaks of it as a proclamation, —a telling from age to age and from shore to shore. The Eucharistic act announces and re-announces "the Lord's death" (1 Cor. xi. 26),—the death endured by One who is more than man,—and of whom the act itself bears witness that He is alive, and that its witness is only needed "until He come," when "remembrance" will pass again into sight. But the Eucharist cannot be regarded as simply an act between man and man; and if the remembrance is not only in

the heart, no more is it only amongst the members of the Church. It is a remembrance towards God. And this is its primary character. With thanksgivings for all God's mercies,—His ordinary gifts of food and drink, His providential dealings with our race,—we specially give thanks to Him for the mercies bestowed upon us in Christ, and display to Him, and not only to one another, that precious Body and Blood in which all our hopes are centred. Such an act is most truly a sacrifice.[1]

To prevent mistake, however, the first thing which we must clearly apprehend in the Catholic doctrine of the Eucharistic Sacrifice, is that it neither detracts from the perfectness of the Sacrifice of the Cross, nor

[1] Many have thought that the very words "Do this" are intended to have a sacrificial meaning, and should rather be rendered "Offer This." In that case, of course, the word "this" will denote the Eucharistic Bread and Cup respectively, and not the Eucharistic action;—"Offer this Thing," not "Perform this action." The Greek word for "do" (ποιεῖν) is constantly so used in the Old Testament:—for instance, where we are obliged to say, "I will offer bullocks and goats" (Ps. lxvi. 13), the Septuagint has, "I will *do* bullocks and goats." The word "do" in such a connexion does not point particularly to the slaughter of the animals, but to the whole sacrificial operation. There would therefore be no dogmatic objection to such an interpretation. If our Lord had wished to say, "Offer This," without using a word of slaughter, He could scarcely have used other words than those which He used. The difficult sentence in 1 Cor. xi. 25, "This do as often as ye drink," would be much simplified if we could supply the same object to both verbs. But the rendering "Offer this" has against it the fact that it is of recent origin. All the Greek Fathers, with the exception of S. Justin Martyr, treat the words as meaning, "Perform this action." Although they certainly see a sacrificial connotation in the words as a whole, they do not give so much as a hint that another rendering of the word "this" had occurred to them. Such could hardly have been the case if the Evangelists and Apostles had understood the words so differently.

in any way subjects the glorified Lord again to pain or death. We cannot follow Bellarmine in thinking that "change and destruction" of the thing offered is essential to a sacrifice. In the typical sacrifices—or at least with some portions of them—this was the case, because, without their being burned or the like, there was no way of expressing that they had passed away from all human utility and were irrevocably given over to God. But the destruction was only necessary because of the inherent weakness of the type. The essential feature of sacrifice is the presentation to God of that which is precious to us and acceptable to Him. If, therefore, we believe that in the Eucharist Christ is offered to God, there is no need to think of Him as still suffering. Although some expressions in the Fathers would literally imply that they thought so, they can readily be paralleled by expressions in authors who certainly did not think so. A S. Chrysostom or a S. Ambrose would have been as much shocked as we are to read in a modern schoolbook of dogmatic theology by a Cardinal Archbishop, that in consequence of the "immolation" in the Eucharist, "a change takes place in the Victim: by the consecration, Jesus Christ is reduced to an unnatural condition; and those sacramental words, 'This is My Body,' 'This is My Blood,' pronounced separately, are like a sword which separates mystically and as far as may be the Body and the Blood of Christ." The whole spirit of the Epistle to the Hebrews, with its clear and powerful contrast of the daily propitiations of the Law and the majestic single-

ness of Christ's self-sacrifice on the Cross,—and all right Catholic feeling as well,—rises in judgment against such a perversion, or rather such a contradiction, of the Gospel. We have already shewn that the manner of Christ's Real Presence in the Sacrament of the Altar is not such as to drag Him back from His state of glory; nor is the nature of the Christian Sacrifice such as to involve Him in any fresh and perpetual pain. It could be no "Eucharist" to us if it were so. Instead of joyous anthems, our churches would be filled with the wailings, and sobs, and smitings upon the breast, of those whose sins compelled them, day after day, to save themselves, by again summoning the willing Redeemer back, to undergo some new mysterious anguish for them. Many of us would refuse to save our souls at the price. It is one thing to accept with tears of thankfulness what was once effected for us, without our knowledge, by His Sacrifice: it would be quite another, solemnly and of set purpose to repair to the altar, to perpetuate, or renew, any measure of His redeeming pain.

The way, then, in which the Sacrifice must be conceived of is this. Christ is present with us at the altar in the same manner as in heaven. He allows us at the altar to do with Him what He Himself does in heaven. Although He is for ever seated there, as one whose toils are over, yet He is "a Priest upon His throne" (Zech. vi. 13), and is perpetually engaged in presenting on our behalf the life which He once for all laid down and has taken again, and never needs to lay down from henceforth. By means of that

Sacrament which He puts in our hands, we do the same. We do not merely speak of the Cross to the Father; we shew Him the Body and Blood of the living and present Saviour, who died upon the Cross, and who not only once for all made a propitiation for us there, but who "*is* a propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for all the world" (1 John ii. 2). In this sense we may even use language not commonly used in England, and say that the Eucharist is a propitiatory Sacrifice. It is so in the same way as Christ's presentment of Himself in heaven is. There is no iteration of the Sacrifice of the Cross, and no continuation of it, properly so called; but neither is there the bare remembrance of it. In the living Person of Christ, the eternal Sacrifice of Calvary remains an ever fresh fact, neither needing nor admitting of a renewal. Christ presents Himself in heaven for us in the inexhaustible virtue of His past suffering; and all the efficacy of the Eucharistic Sacrifice is derived from the same.

§ 17.

All Christian prayer is founded upon the Eucharistic Communion and Sacrifice. We acquire the right to pray by union with Christ, and we exercise it by pleading His merits. This is involved in saying "through Jesus Christ our Lord," when we pray. It is called in Scripture, praying "in His name." The solitary prayers of the individual Christian and the united prayers of the Church are alike in this respect. They are only heard by virtue of membership in

Christ, and only so far as they are in true agreement with His own intercession. Not every prayer is "in the name of Christ" because of His name being mentioned in it, any more than "two or three" are necessarily "gathered together in His name" (S. Matt. xviii. 20) because they call themselves Christians. There must be no admixture of any other principle, if the name of Christ is to be cogently urged. When the basis on which the assembly meets, is Christianity *plus* or *minus* some separate view of its own—such as Unitarian or Irvingite Christianity, for example—then it does not meet purely in the name of Christ, and cannot with confidence count on the special Presence which He promises. None but the Catholic Church of His own foundation meets simply in His name. That is why the validity as it is called, of other than Catholic communions is doubted. No one denies that Christ can give Himself to individual faith, even amidst a schismatic assembly; but the assembling in a schismatic name gives no security that Christ will be there, but rather the contrary.

Prayer in Christ's name, whether public or private, must be unreservedly in accordance with His revealed character and purpose. "We do not ask in the name of our Master," says S. Austin, "what we ask otherwise than by our Master's rules." Such a caution puts us on our guard in prayer. It makes us ask conditionally for things about which we are not clear. At the same time, when we cordially accept the name in which we pray, it gives us perfect assurance in two directions. It assures us that our prayer

will not be literally and mechanically answered, however fervently we pray, if what we beg would be harmful to ourselves, or to the Church, or to the honour of Christ. And it assures us that if what we ask is good, we shall certainly gain it, in due time. The limitation which is thus placed on Christian prayer by no means unnerves it, or reduces it to a languid fatalism. On the contrary, our Lord encourages earnestness and insistence. He Himself used "strong crying and tears" in the Garden, even over a doubtful point; and we are told that He was "heard in consequence of His careful reverence" (Heb. v. 7). The thing which He conditionally asked was not given Him, but the prayer was not fruitless. It procured something better instead. Prayer is thus not merely the human will submitting itself to the will of God. It is a free and filial expression of our desires to the heavenly Father, in the confidence that His wisdom is greater than ours, and His love and power as great as His wisdom. So far from its being an act of passive resignation, it actually sets in motion the Divine activities in directions in which, without it, God would not have worked. As it is in temporal things, so also in spiritual. God allows His operation to be conditioned by ours. The riches with which God has stored a fertile country are left idle or opened out according to the energy and skill of its possessors. And so with the riches of the kingdom of grace. If they are to be made the most of, Christians, both in private and in public, must pray, and pray "in the Holy Ghost" (S. Jude 20). Praying in

the Holy Ghost is the correlative to praying in the name of our Lord. It indicates both the fervour and energy with which we must pray (Rom. viii. 26), and also the sanctified purport of our prayer.

§ 18.

Baptism, considered as a washing, sets us free from the guilt and shame of our original sin; and, considered as a regeneration, it implants in us a new principle by which to overcome its power. Nevertheless, the "infection of nature," as the Article says, "doth remain." Baptized men,—even those in whom their regeneration has taken good effect,—are not exempt from sinful movements within; and sometimes they fall into actual sins, and into long-continued states of sin. S. John's teaching does not deny this. When he says, "He that hath been begotten of God doeth not sin, because His seed abideth in him, and he is unable to sin, because he hath been begotten of God" (1 John iii. 9), he is confronting Antinomian license. He denies that sin is normally compatible with the Divine birth, or can be a matter of indifference to the regenerate. He teaches that so far as the regenerate man is true to his own nature, sin is impossible for him; and that in so far as he sins, he is acting in opposition to his real self. The sin of the baptized man is made the more exceeding sinful, because to him it is, in the highest sense, unnatural. When, therefore, the baptized have sinned, what provision is there for their recovery?

It has already been said that Baptism neither can

be, nor needs to be, repeated. The baptismal union with Christ, once given, cleanses the life which desires to be cleansed, from end to end, within and without, not in fragments, but as a complete whole. But it is difficult for the mind to grasp this idea as it stands. As we pass through life, we are obliged to deal with it piecemeal, as a matter of day by day. Therefore, since we find ourselves often involved in sin, and our consciences tell us that we are again guilty, we require to have our baptismal washing made a new and present reality to us. Such a blessing our Lord promised us when He said that, though a man would not need to go down a second time into the great bath and wash himself all over, but would know himself as a whole to be clean, yet he would need to remove the stains upon his feet (S. John xiii. 10). He bade us humbly apply to one another this merciful, if somewhat tedious and unpleasant, ministry: "Ye," He said, "ought also to wash one another's feet" (ver. 14). In so saying, He instituted, not in form, but in substance, what is sometimes called the Sacrament of Penance.[1] It is the application of no new element, but the continued and partial application, according to our need, of that by which we were first cleansed. No new gift is con-

[1] It is usually alleged that the words spoken on the night of the Resurrection, "Whosesoever sins ye remit," etc. (S. John xx. 23), were the institution of this Sacrament. But it would be truer to say that they conveyed the power of which this Sacrament is a special exercise. The words include the Baptismal remission as well as the post-baptismal; and in themselves they contain no direct command to absolve sins.

ferred on us by it, but the baptismal purity from guilt is maintained and renewed.

It is questionable in what particular act the Sacrament of Penance lies. Roman theologians incline to make it consist partly, if not altogether, in the dispositions and acts of the recipient. His repentance, and the appropriate expression of it, enter, in their judgment, into the very essence of the Sacrament. Such a doctrine shews a true and evangelical sense of the uselessness of a formal absolution pronounced upon an impenitent soul. Nevertheless, it is simpler, and more in accordance with analogy, to consider these things as being rather the necessary qualifications for receiving the grace, and to make the Absolution alone truly sacramental. To unburden the heart in confession is a great relief; but the act of authoritative pardon is the point where the Divine bounty comes into play. Confession is human; but Absolution is indeed a superhuman thing. The priests to whom, as officers of the Church, Jesus Christ has entrusted the absolving power (S. John xx. 23), exercise it as no possession of their own, but ministerially, for Him. They are His ambassadors, offering reconciliation on no terms but His; but, on His terms, confidently offering it. And what they offer must not be coldly reduced to a remission of Church censures; it is the blessing of a free and bold access again to the living God, who has been justly displeased. Nor is this Absolution a purely subjective thing. There is in it, as in Baptism, a real, substantive movement of that cleansing grace which is

stored in the Church. Whether it takes effect or not, depends upon the disposition of the recipient; but in any case the grace is there.

There appears to be no sufficient reason for supposing, as some do, that Absolution is only sacramental when pronounced in private to single souls. In itself, so far as the movement of grace is concerned, the Absolution is the same, whether public or private. If it were not so, there would be no particular reason for restricting the utterance of the public Absolutions to the priest. The difference lies in the method of preparing to receive it. If souls are able to grasp it for themselves as firmly, it is as valid and full when uttered in a general formula to a thousand together as when uttered to them one by one. It is to be feared that the public Absolutions are as a rule more listlessly given and received than the private: but God is good, and perhaps even a listless faith,—listless at the moment, because ill-instructed,—may suffice to appropriate such a measure of the grace as is positively necessary.

If the Sacrament of Penance be understood in the narrower sense, as administered in one of its forms, in private, we can lay down no all-embracing rule about its necessity. All who would be saved, must be absolved; and all who would be absolved, must confess to the best of their ability. But Holy Scripture, although it recommends confession to men as well as to God (S. James v. 16), lays down no positive and universal command to make definite confession to a priest as a condition of Absolution. The experience

of ages has led the Church to provide that method in case of need; but without clearer instructions from ancient times, she has no right to prescribe it for all. The Holy English Church vindicates for her children the liberty with which Christ has set us free,—in both directions. If conscience tells them that a full and explicit confession before God alone, joined with the general confession in the public service, would be more beneficial to their advance in holiness than private confession to a priest, no man may compel them to a private confession. If conscience tells them that a private confession would be beneficial, no man may dare to forbid it them. Upon the doctrinal question, indeed, the English Church leaves no doubt whatever; but the practical question is left to be decided for each soul separately. There are many cases where private confession to the priest would seem to do more harm than good. But it can hardly be doubted that things have gone too far the other way amongst us, and that it would be of great advantage to many, especially of the male sex, if confession (in the technical sense) were considered less exceptional than it is. A Christian man's sin is not a thing between God and his own soul alone, for we all "are members one of another" (Eph. iv. 25). Even sturdy independence and masculine self-reliance can be too dearly purchased;—though the practice of confession by no means necessarily destroys them.

The use of Confession need not involve Direction, which is a wholly different thing.

§ 19.

The Sacrament of Unction of the Sick is formally in abeyance amongst us, but its place is taken by the solemn Office of Visitation. It would be inexact to ascribe its origin to the directions given by S. James (ch. v. 14). Clearly that Apostle is recommending a practice already in existence. Most probably it sprang from the promise of our Lord; "They shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover" (S. Mark xvi. 18; comp. S. Mark vi. 13). Unction and Imposition of Hands are closely connected, and both are strengthened and solemn forms of blessing. There is undoubtedly something of a sacramental nature in all benedictions; they are gracious outgoings of the Holy Spirit in the Church towards the persons who receive them. Of such benedictions, Confirmation is the greatest; and the Unction of the Sick, or Imposition of Hands upon them, though certainly no repetition of Confirmation, partakes of the same character. There is no reason to think that it was miraculous in its intention, except in the same way as all prayer is; but its intention was primarily the restoration of bodily health. The promise attached to it was never unconditional: recovery is given or withheld as is most expedient in the eyes of God. But doubtless, if the lesser blessing is withheld, a greater is given, and the Holy Ghost, instead of quickening the sick body to earthly life again, refreshes the soul to meet death, and so works towards a better resurrection. It would be an undue pressing of the letter of Scripture, especially in view

of the uncertain history of this rite in early days, to make the visible act either of unction or of laying on of hands essential to the obtaining of the inward grace; but the latter symbol can be used without any disloyalty in performing the existing Office of Visitation.

§ 20.

The means of grace already spoken of are the only ones which claim to be for all Christians without exception. Of the two which remain, Ordination has already been dealt with in connexion with the Apostolic nature of the Church. It will only be necessary here to repeat that the act is truly sacramental. It is not only an official recognition of the person promoted to ministerial authority. It conveys a special *charisma*, or gift, for his work. In the case of those who are consecrated to supreme rule in the Church, S. Paul describes the *charisma* as "a spirit of power and love and discipline" (2 Tim. i. 7). He teaches in the same passage that this gift does not work unless the recipient diligently cultivates it. But inasmuch as the Word and Sacraments belong to Christ and to the Church, and are not the private property of those who administer them, no unfaithfulness or wrong intention on the part of the duly appointed agent can vitiate them. He may by his spirituality enhance their actual effect, or by his apathy detract from it; but he has no power to annul the essential grace, any more than to create it.

§ 21.

Marriage differs from all the foregoing in two ways. The other Sacraments belong solely to the Christian dispensation, and they concern the Church at large. Not so with this. It only concerns the Church in so far as the Church is deeply interested in her children's private welfare and the good of society. And marriage is a primeval institution, a Sacrament of Nature. The Church which blesses it does not make it; in technical language, the ministers of the Sacrament are the husband and wife. When a husband and wife are baptized into the Church from without, no new ceremony needs to be performed; the Church recognises the tie between them as lawful marriage. Of course, in cases where a man has lived under the system of polygamy, the passage into Christ cannot carry with it conjugal relations with more than one wife, for the words "they twain" are of the very essence of marriage as known to the Church; but the one wife who is retained is a true wife already. Nevertheless, the consecration with which Christianity enriches all life profoundly modifies marriage. There is nothing necessarily sinful in heathen polygamy; to recognise it among Christians would be to sanction a regulated adultery. Heathen marriages are not essentially indissoluble; Christian man and wife can never be anything else to each other, and all the legal divorces in the world can only make a profane pretence of putting asunder those whom God has joined together. Christian marriage

is more than a binding contract between two parties still in reality separate. "They are no more twain" (S. Matt. xix. 6). There is, of course, no fusion of personality; but there is a vital union of personalities for which S. Paul can find no parallel but that between Christ and the Church. Where marriage has its due course, this union goes far beyond what is earthly and physical. The natural element in it is made to serve as the basis and vehicle of Divine grace. By coming within the sphere of the Holy Ghost's operations, marriage conveys the grace of unselfish devotion, of perfected and purified outpouring of heart to heart, of living in and for each other. The solitariness of the single life is relieved, and its deficiencies more than made good.

Such being the Scriptural and Catholic doctrine of marriage, the Church cannot be accused of Manichæan asceticism, when she recognises as even higher than the grace of marriage the grace of Christian virginity. While nothing is more selfish and unworthy of a Christian than to abstain from marriage out of dislike of responsibilities or out of cynical indifference, it is a noble thing to feel, and voluntarily embrace, and suffer patiently, the privations of the single life, in order to be more freely at the disposal of God and man. Our Lord spoke of it as a "gift" given to a few, and challenged those who could, to take up with it (S. Matt. xix. 11, 12). And S. Paul, who at least in widowhood, if not (as is much more probable) in virginity, had received the gift, commends it to the reverent admiration of the Church as the "better" thing (1 Cor. vii. 38).

Chapter X.

The Process of Salvation.

Grace personal in its Aim and Method—Election according to Foreknowledge—Predestination and Human Freedom—Grace and Free Will—Vocation—Repentance and Faith—Conversion—Justification by Faith—Christian Assurance—Sanctification—Final Perseverance.

§ 1.

The faith becomes truly a Gospel when it is seen in its application to individual souls. If we were to stop at the point already reached, we should only have sketched a system, a philosophy, or a polity. But God aims through these things—through the Church and the Sacraments—at reaching individual souls. He does not deal with men only in the mass. Although He desires to lay hold upon them in order to weld them into a perfect unity in Christ, yet they have, singly, a value of their own in His eyes which cannot be exaggerated. The Apostle speaks of the redeeming work of Christ as effected for the whole and for the part in precisely the same terms. "Christ loved the Church, and gave Himself for her," he says; but in another place, "He loved me, and gave Himself for me" (Eph. v. 25; Gal. ii. 20). It requires more

imagination, as well as more unselfishness, than the run of men possess, to feel from the outset great joy in promises to the world, the race, the Church. The thing which touches hearts is to discover God's interest in their personal needs and trials. This, then, is what makes the Church so evangelical. She seeks men one by one, not for her own good, but for theirs. The love of souls, the longing to bring home to them what God feels with regard to them and what He has done to prove it, is as true a "note" of the Church as any of the four which have been described. It is little comfort,—it is positive pain,—to know what blessings are stored for men in the Church, until they have been brought to realise it for themselves and to rejoice in a conscious experience of those blessings.

It is, then, one of the main wonders of the Gospel, that God has not only made a bountiful provision for men's needs in Christ, but that He also prepares and leads men to seek, and to find, and to make good use of the provision. God's grace is not simply embodied in an objective form, and despatched into the world, for any one to help himself to it who likes. It both singles out the persons to whom it comes; and it occupies itself with their inward and most subjective moods and inclinations, aiding them to receive what it brings. In fact we are accustomed almost to restrict the name of Grace to its internal operation upon souls. That beautiful word denotes in the first instance simply a favour; and it may rightly describe God's new line of conduct towards humanity at large in the Incarnation. Nevertheless, its characteristic

action is to be seen to greatest advantage in relation to men one by one. However widely diffused, the favour of God is never promiscuous and undiscriminating; and although it moves on principle, without caprice,—or it could not be Divine,—yet it accommodates and adapts itself most tenderly to the personal objects of its choice. The whole history of Christian souls is the history of the dealings of grace with them. There is an endless diversity in the details of operation, and a guide of souls has to beware of substituting a coarse and rough uniformity of experience for the delicacy and flexibility of grace. Souls are not turned out like manufactured articles. Yet the main course of the history is the same for all. S. Paul gathers it up in a famous summary:—"Whom He foreknew, He also predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be a firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He did predestinate, them He also called; and whom He called, them He also justified; and whom He justified, them He also glorified" (Rom. viii. 29, 30).

§ 2.

This summary shows us how far back the work of grace begins. It does not begin when the man first becomes conscious of it, nor even at his appearance on the stage of life. No Christian emerges unforeseen in the stream of time, to attract on emerging the favourable attention of God. Before the stream began to flow,—before ever God set in motion the forces which ultimately issued in producing the man, the

man was "foreknown." It is not said that all the man's actions were foreknown,—though that would be true enough,—but the man himself. In the eternal play of possible creations before the mind of God in Christ, this character appeared,—this combination of gifts, capable of subserving just this sacred purpose, of exemplifying this special form of truth, of answering to this particular aspect of love. God *knew* that character, and was pleased with it, and determined to give it a real existence, and to subject it to the actual discipline of life; and He so ordered things, that in due time we should be born, and should be born again; and should be set to those "good works which God before prepared that we should walk in them" (Eph. ii. 10).

Foreknowledge, by itself, might be predicated of every human being; for all souls are the creation of God, who cannot be thought of as acting on the spur of the moment. But the foreknowledge which issues in Predestination is not the lot of all. It only holds true of a certain number. Such foreknowledge is the foreknowledge of approval for a particular purpose, and it causes God to make a distinction between those souls and others. They are, in S. Paul's language, "an election of grace" (Rom. xi. 5). It is manifest, upon the face of things, that the grace of God picks and chooses among men. Though all souls are dear to Him, and He "wills all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. ii. 4), yet He does not deal with all alike. As it is with regard to natural gifts—wealth, beauty,

intellect, and the like,—so it is in spiritual things. There is great inequality. The elect are on a different footing from the rest of men. To them has been given, by the predestination of God, what is not the common property of mankind. Whether the numbers who share the privilege with them be large or small, makes no difference to the reality of their election. In some countries and ages,—our own for example,—the elect may form an immense majority of the population; but nevertheless, each single soul is as much the object of a deliberate choice of God, dating from all eternity, as if it were one of a little handful in the Ephesus or Rome of S. Paul's time.

Of course, the difference is not that which Antinomianism has imagined,—that the elect may do with impunity what is regarded as sin in others, for God "hath not given any man licence to sin" (Ecclus. xv. 20). Nor is the way of holiness made easier for them; on the contrary, it is often far harder. The difference is wholly one of spiritual privilege. And that privilege is a present privilege, not a future one. According to the general usage of the New Testament, all who are admitted into the Church on earth are the elect. The term (except in a few passages of the Gospels, where the context makes its meaning clear) does not express those who are finally selected to partake of the joys of heaven. Before that blessing can be theirs, they must, with faithful endeavour, "make their calling and election sure" (2 Pet. i. 10). The thing to which they have been elected, "according to the foreknowledge of God," is described by S. Peter as

"obedience and sprinkling of the Blood of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. i. 2): that is to say, they are Christians. This is already theirs; and if it be rightly used, it is a pledge and an earnest of eternal salvation.

If it seems at all unfair that God should thus make distinctions among His human creatures, which are not based upon their proven personal merits, nor even upon His prevision of their merits, but upon His own absolute sovereign pleasure, we must remember first that we do not yet see all the issues of this mode of action, and that in the end it may be found to be the best way of benefiting mankind at large, to approach them through a concentrated and united body of highly privileged souls, whose object it is not to exclude others from their privilege, but to extend it to as many as they can reach. The elect people of God, in this dispensation as well as in that which preceded it, are not elected only for their own advantage, but for the advantage of all. "Ye are a chosen race," says S. Peter, "in order that ye may carry abroad the tidings of His excellencies who called you out of darkness into His marvellous light" (1 Pet. ii. 9). If the salvation of the world was to be effected in a historical manner at all, perhaps no other method was possible. But however this may be, at least the harshness of the doctrine of election is softened, when we see that the true antithesis to election is not rejection or reprobation, but passing by, and that, perhaps, only for a time. Mankind are not divided into two classes,—the few eternally set

apart for salvation,—the mass for damnation. The privilege of the few, though real and positive now, is theirs on probation; and others are to gain it through them.

§ 3.

Attempts have been made, but without much success, to draw a broad line of distinction between Election and Predestination. Those attempts have been prompted by the desire to reconcile God's eternal purpose with human freedom. Perhaps it is impossible for our present intellectual powers clearly to state how the two things are compatible. It is but one instance of the difficulty of co-ordinating the finite and the infinite. At present we do not see, in the first place, how time and eternity meet. Eternity is commonly thought of as if it were a state or series anterior to time, and to be resumed again when time comes to an end. This, however, only reduces eternity to time again, and puts the life of God in the same line as our own, only coming from further back. And our conceptions of the almightiness of God are coarse. It seems as if an almighty being could never be crossed or hindered. Having everything in His own hands, and perfectly knowing His own mind, God must, so men argue, always have His own way in every detail. But they forget that God is not an abstract almightiness, but almighty Holiness and Love; and that for the sake of holiness and love He may be willing to submit to things which He would rather have had otherwise, confident

that His holiness and love will eventually come forth victorious even where He seems to have been most crossed.

This at any rate is certain, that where two truths seem to us incompatible, one of which is beyond our experience, and the other within it, we have no right to magnify the more distant truth at the expense of the nearer. And as we are conscious of freedom,—within limits which we shall proceed to discuss,—we are bound not to interpret God's Predestination in such a manner as to annihilate our freedom. God's elect are not machines, which fulfil of necessity and with exactness a fore-ordained programme. Their liberty is not a semblance and fiction. They are not like chessmen on a board who should attribute to themselves the actions of the mind and hand that moves them. When Holy Scripture appeals to motives of conduct, it recognises in us a power to give heed to such motives, or to ignore them. Commandments and promises, warnings and threats, all shew that God Himself regards us as voluntary and responsible agents. If the lives of the predestinate were only the execution of what was perfectly settled and mapped out eternally, God's anger at their falls, and God's joy over their penitence, would become for us unmeaning.

It seems plain, therefore, that we must regard God's Predestination as contingent, not absolute, so far as concerns our ultimate destiny. As we have shewn, the Scripture teaching about election, being for practical and not for theoretical purposes, is con-

cerned with our present position, rather than the future. It rests with us whether the life of grace shall pass into the life of glory. So far as we can see, the Divine Predestination is capable of being defeated. But such a thought, though full of solemnity and fear, does not rob the doctrine of Predestination of all strength and comfort. On the contrary. If we could suppose the Divine Predestination to be absolute, then we might live in a fever of uncertainty whether we were among the predestinate or not. Few, especially at the outset of their Christian career, would dare to assume it of themselves; and in many instances it would do more harm than good to do so. But when we follow the teaching of S. Peter and S. Paul, and recognise that all the baptized are elect and predestinate, then, although the final result is not yet assured to us, we receive unspeakable comfort and hope. The weakest Christian may believe that he is no intruder within the sacred precinct, brought in by his own presumption or the mistaken kindness of friends. He is where God Himself has placed him, and had eternally determined to place him. His very weaknesses may be a reason why he was thus elected, to shew strikingly the power of Divine grace. And if the discerning choice of God has so favoured him as to translate him into the kingdom of His dear Son, then God will not easily give him up or cast him out again. The Christian sees, represented in the concrete fact of his Baptism, the eternal and unchangeable attitude of God towards him. His own personality, now passing through the vicissitudes of an earthly dis-

cipline, is linked to the stability of the life of God. That God should change His mind towards His servant is inconceivable, unless the servant should altogether throw off his allegiance to God. God has set His heart upon him, and will not easily let him go. By gentle means, or by stern, He will use every art to retain him. And thus the man who would soon despair if he thought only of his own weak will, is encouraged, without being made presumptuous, by remembering that there is another, stronger Will, no less deeply interested in his salvation than he is himself.

§ 4.

The Grace which foreknows and elects us in eternity, actively busies itself with us when, in due time, we come into life. It would go ill with us otherwise. It has been shewn in an earlier chapter that the will of man is not wholly free. Even according to the Creator's intention it was never free in the sense of being unlimited and unconditioned. Adam had freedom of will in Paradise, but his freedom had only the range belonging to man, and to a man in his circumstances. Within that range, however, it was truly free,—by which we mean that there was no unnatural check upon its action, either from within or from without. For without, everything had been designed for the very purpose of eliciting all his powers healthily and happily; and within, there was no disorder to hinder him from complete correspondence with his environment. But when he abused his powers, he vitiated his own constitution, and his relation to all

that surrounded him. He came to be unnaturally under the power of the things that were intended to have ministered to his advancement, and he found himself destitute of the force by which to recover his former footing. The heirs of his fallen nature are still indeed free, in a sense. When they act, that is, they are conscious of never being violently forced to act, against their wills, they themselves repudiating the action continuously and to the last. Strong pressure may be brought to bear upon them, which they feel unable to resist; but in the end, even if they would have preferred to act otherwise, they act voluntarily. They yield, though it may be reluctantly, to the pressure. In this sense they are free agents. But this does not constitute true freedom. Fallen men have only the freedom of a diseased, not of a healthy subject. What would be repulsive to the human soul in its right state, has a morbid fascination for them which they cannot resist. They act according to their nature when they voluntarily choose it; for the unnatural has become to them the natural. A pressure of temptation, which Adam in Paradise would have instantly repelled, by the wholesome instinct of his uncorrupted constitution, in concert with ever present grace, overwhelms at once his descendant, as unwilling as he is unable to stem the flood.

The Pelagian teaching, which it was the great work of S. Austin to confound, started with an excellent intention. It claimed to enter, in the name of masculine and common-sense morality, a protest against a system which appeared to discourage

strenuous effort, and make men only passive in the work of sanctification. It did not indeed assert that men might be righteous, if they chose, without the grace of God; but it explained grace in such a way as to confuse it with natural endowments. Grace, to the Pelagian, consisted in such gifts as conscience and free will within the man, and the revelation of God's character and law without. Refusing to recognise the congenital depravity which results from the Fall, this school of moralists called upon men to be up and doing, instead of petitioning God for more grace to do what He had already put well within their power. In this first rough form Pelagianism was not difficult to expose; but it was more difficult to expose the Semipelagianism, as it is called, which succeeded it, and which in various forms continues in the Church to this day. The Semipelagian turn of thought recognises, though it minimises, the disorder of our human nature. It also accepts a true definition of grace. But it clings to the notion that there is at any rate so much good left in man as to enable him to meet God part way. He cannot, so it is said, succeed in his efforts after righteousness without Divine aid, but he can desire to succeed, and do his best, and God will reward his endeavours by a gift of grace. He can put himself in the way to obtain grace, and so practise himself in the lower degrees of goodness that he may (in the quaint phrase condemned by the Anglican Articles) deserve grace of congruity.

Catholic teaching, on the other hand, in accord-

ance with Scripture and with deep observation, insists upon ascribing to God's grace the very earliest germ of a movement in the will towards what is good. The Church does not, it is true, agree with Calvinism in its extravagant estimate of the corruption of our nature. It acknowledges that, in spite of internal discord and of a distinct bent towards selfishness in some form or other, there yet remain in man the elements of a noble being, if only they can be rightly set to work. But without a quickening touch the noble elements have no chance of going rightly to work. The will of man, at best, cannot choose in entire independence of its surroundings, or fall in love with visions which are not suggested by the things it actually sees. If, therefore, it is to desire goodness, goodness must be presented to it; and, in the present state of man and his world, goodness must be presented with sufficient vigour and pertinacity to neutralise, at least, the dead set which is being made upon the soul from the other side, and give it a fair field. Grace must bring a counter-pressure to bear upon the will, to save it from being swept away by temptation, and enable it even to wish for what is good. The Semipelagian theory is so far true, that each gift of grace properly utilised becomes a foundation for fresh gifts. God gives "grace in answer to grace" (S. John i. 16). But they are His own gifts which He thus rewards in us. Trace the series back to the very earliest, and the very earliest is as much His as the latest. Man has absolutely nothing by which to purchase or attract even the first

rudiments of grace. It would be quite contrary to the fundamental notion of grace to think so. There is nothing so opposed to it as the thought of debt or of merit. "If by grace," says Paul, "then no longer as a result of works, otherwise grace is no more grace" (Rom. xi. 6). It is of the very essence of grace that it should be a movement of pure generosity on the part of God, unmixed with any sense of obligation or necessity. Thus the grace of God is as much needed to enable us to desire to do what is right, as to do it when we desire it. It is a true, and not a false humility,—the payment of a just tribute, not a hypocritical adulation,—when the soul, on doing well, refuses to take any credit to itself whatever, and passes on the glory with sincere gratitude to God, saying, "Thou, Lord, hast wrought all our works in us" (Isa. xxvi. 12), and again, "It is God which worketh in us, both to will, and to work, in fulfilment of His gracious purpose" (Phil. ii. 13). It is His "preventing (*i.e.* antecedent) grace" which inspires the holy wish; it is "accompanying, or co-operating grace" which brings the holy wish to a good effect. Thus from first to last the performance of every right action, and the building up of every good character, is God's work.

Yet grace never supersedes the man's self-determination. It would be totally at variance with its purpose, were it to compel men to act in a certain way, independent of their own choice. For it is not God's object merely to get right things done, but to get holy characters established; and the only

notion we can form of a holy character is that of a being who always freely chooses holiness. Forced sanctity would be but a poor make-believe. Grace may, it is true, sometimes go beyond the bare restoration of a moral equilibrium. It may make it, as in the case of Saul of Tarsus, "hard for a man to kick against the pricks" (Acts xxvi. 14). Sovereign grace can be very masterful; in its benevolent determination it often appears almost overbearing. But there are lengths to which it cannot go. In the very nature of things it dares not be irresistible. The man himself, in the last resort, and on each occasion, must decide on which set of forces he will throw himself, those that make for good, or those that make for evil.

§ 5.

The first motions of preventing Grace are indistinguishable from those of Providence. They take place in that kingdom of nature which needs preparing before it can receive the characteristic work of grace. To this fact our Lord has been thought to point when He says, "No man can come to Me, except the Father which sent Me draw him" (S. John vi. 44), —where, however, we must be careful to understand that our Lord is not repelling and discouraging effort, but rather assuring His hearers that if they feel themselves desirous of coming to Him, it is a proof already of the Father's interest in their salvation. The Father thus draws men naturally towards Christ by causing them to be born of Christian parents, by

temperament, by education and discipline, by sorrows and losses, or joys and affections, which make their hearts susceptible, even by permitting falls into sin which create a sense of bondage and a desire for liberty. Then, when the soul is ripe for it, God utters His Call to it. The eternal Election expresses itself in time as an actual Vocation. At what moment in the history of the soul the vocation shall be issued, God alone can tell. The man's own behaviour may hasten or delay it, though (as we have said) he can do nothing to cause it. And after being called he may long be unaware of it, or neglect it, or fight against it. In the normal state of things, in a Christian nation, the call of God comes to us in infancy, before we have power to discern its meaning. To many the sense of the call is mixed with the earliest recollections, and has quietly increased with advancing years. Many who received it in infancy, only become conscious of it in later life, and suppose that it never came to them before. There are some to whom it remains through life an unknown thing. Some, it may be, hear it for the first time in the moment of dying. Men to whom it does not come in vain may reply to its summons with very varying degrees of alacrity; but, although the firstfruits of grace may be given before the call is clearly heard, the soul cannot be said to be living the life of grace until it begins to respond to its vocation.

§ 6.

To create in the soul a sense of need, and to direct it to the source of supply, is the first marked action of grace. These two things are the beginnings of Repentance and Faith.

Repentance is not merely a change of conduct, but a change of conduct based upon a change of feeling and mind. It is a repudiation of what is now felt to be sinful. It is not enough to leave off from doing wrong and begin to do right; there must be a sense of guilt, joined with sorrow for having done wrong in the past, and for being still tainted by inward evil. And in order that the repentance may be good, the motive for sorrow must be found not solely in the sinner's hopes or fears for himself, nor even in the thought of the injury he has inflicted upon his fellow-men; but in the knowledge that he has grieved and offended God. The determination to make what amends may be possible (called in technical language, satisfaction), and the readiness to acknowledge to God and (where advisable) to man the whole extent of the wrong done (or confession), must be the outcome of a loving and unselfish grief, which bears the name of contrition. These—contrition, confession, amendment,—are the three parts of repentance.

Faith, in like manner, is not the acquiescence of the intellect in a true proposition or propositions. To assent, for instance, to the fact that Christ died for us is insufficient. Saving faith is the reliance

of the soul upon a living Being. Convinced by such facts as it has already apprehended, the soul is assured that the unknown is in keeping with the known, and that it may safely trust its God. Nor is the trust a passive one only. It cannot help influencing action. As repentance springs from the heart and expresses itself in language and in conduct, so does faith. That is not faith which does not prompt men to make "confession with the mouth unto salvation" (Rom. x. 10), and "thoughtfully to take the lead in excellent works" (Titus iii. 8). Faith may be described as an active and outspoken reliance upon God.

There is no necessary order of precedence between Faith and Repentance. Sometimes the one makes its conscious appearance first, and sometimes the other. They continue to work side by side throughout life. Repentance is perpetually deepened by the advance of faith,—and faith strengthened in proportion to the increasing purity of repentance. Neither term represents a fixed amount. There is an endless variety of degrees of repentance and faith. No quantitative limit is named in Scripture, as a minimum below which the soul cannot be saved. The thing required is that repentance and faith should be honest and sincere so far as they go. If that be the case, then, however small may be the present amount, it contains the whole future development. When our Lord says to His disciples, "If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, nothing shall be impossible unto you" (S. Matt. xvii. 20), He does not mean that the very

smallest measure of faith will then and there be able to work miracles, but that it will go on till it becomes able to work them, because a true faith necessarily expands. We are not in a position, therefore, to say whether saving faith must, at any particular moment, be what is called *fides formata*,—that is, a faith fertilised by love,—or not. In any given case, the answer to that question must depend on the opportunities which the soul has had.

§ 7.

When repentance and faith reach a point where they become conscious, free, and energetic, the crisis is known as Conversion. Conversion is not quite the same as an awakening to spiritual facts; for there is sometimes, as in the case of Judas, a real awakening without conversion, and, on the other hand, a true conversion often takes place without much awakening. The essence of conversion is a true movement of the will, turning solidly from self and the world to God. If it is true that all men are born with a bent towards sin, and have their faces set in a wrong direction, then at some point of their lives or another, and in some mode or another, there must come a voluntary change. But it is a fatal mistake to suppose that conversion must be exactly alike in all, and to take as the normal type of it that which comes when a man has grown up to years of discretion in carelessness and sin. It wears different aspects in different men, according to their temperament, and according to their circumstances. It may take place in infancy, or it may take

place on the death-bed. With some the crisis comes unperceived, like the moment when the sun begins to appear above the horizon. With others it comes through agonizing struggles and on a sudden. But in the most sudden cases, there has been a secret preparation; and in the most quiet, there is a definite point at which the turning begins to be truly voluntary. God has need of all kinds of experience in His kingdom of grace, and we cannot assign a higher value to the one form of conversion or to the other. Only we see that, as a rule, the temperaments which are the most vividly and violently awakened to spiritual facts,—such facts as guilt, and pardon, judgment to come, and the meaning of the Cross,—are those which are the most effective agents in the evangelization of the world; while the others are often the most useful in the work of edifying.

It has been pointed out elsewhere that Conversion is not to be confounded with Regeneration. There is no necessary connexion between the two. Sincere and deep conversions took place under the Jewish dispensation; we might almost say that they take place under still less perfect systems; but regeneration is the peculiar privilege of Christianity. Conversion may either begin before the act of regeneration, as in the life of S. Paul; or it may follow after, as in that of S. Francis and many others who have been baptized in infancy. Regeneration is a metaphysical change, altering a man's nature: conversion is a moral change, altering a man's character. The one gives him new faculties, and a new sphere in

which to exercise them: the other gives a new direction to whatever faculties he has. Though unquestionably regeneration, which makes us children of God, is a higher benefit than conversion, which makes us begin to be good men, yet, unless it be preceded, or accompanied, or followed by conversion, it will avail a man nothing, or rather increase his damnation. Conversion, on the other hand, though through lack of opportunity, or through ignorance and prejudice, it may not be crowned in this life by regeneration, is assured of a true salvation hereafter. Of the two, therefore, the one which is intrinsically the less, is the more essential to the soul's welfare. Conversion without Baptism does not place the soul in the same position as if it had received Baptism; but Baptism without conversion does not place the soul in the same position as if it had been converted. Allowing to conversion its largest diversity of form and circumstance and degree, we must assert that it is, in the widest acceptation, "generally necessary to salvation." Our Lord was not using the term in the special sense which it has acquired in modern systems, but He laid down a principle which may be applied whenever a soul has not yet adopted a right attitude towards God, when He said, "Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven" (S. Matt. xviii. 3).

§ 8.

Justification, according to the strict meaning of the word as used in Scripture, is God's declaration of

the soul's freedom from guilt. It is both less and more than forgiveness. The word does not contain that touching element of personal love which is felt in forgiveness; but at the same time it brings out more clearly the abolition and real undoing of sin. It is a forensic word, expressing the view which God takes of the soul in His character of Judge. It is the opposite of condemning. When He justifies, He declares not guilty. If Roman theologians differ from us concerning the grounds of justification, it is mainly because it has become traditional with them to give a different definition of the word itself, which they practically identify with Sanctification. That being so, it could not be expected that they should be in agreement with us about the terms on which it is given. Nevertheless, the most hopeful way of coming to an understanding will be to adhere to the ascertainable sense of the word in Scripture, where it has nothing to do with the process by which the soul is *made* righteous, but with the act, or mental attitude, which *recognises* the soul as righteous. It must, however, be frankly acknowledged that a righteous Judge cannot possibly recognise a soul as righteous when it is not so. If therefore God justifies any man in the Scriptural sense of the word, it must be because the man is previously in course of being justified in the Roman sense,—because, that is, an active principle of righteousness is infused into him.

This brings us at once to the terms or grounds of justification. In the New Testament we are said to be justified by our faith, by our works, and by our

words. These three things correspond to the usual division of human activity into thought, word, and deed. It is obvious that the deepest of the three is that which lies hidden in the secret places of the heart, and that the outward manifestations of word and deed are only of moral value in so far as they truly represent what is passing within. This is best seen in the case of the most superficial of all, namely words. If our Lord says, "Every idle word which men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment; for by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned," it is because of the reason alleged a few verses before, "For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh" (S. Matt. xii. 34, 37). But the same principle applies to actions also. While action is the best, indeed the only test of inward purpose, it is not—at least so far as men are judges—an infallible one. Men may deceive by deeds as well as by words; and what are in themselves good works, whether of mercy, or of piety, or of self-discipline, may be the cloak in which self-sufficiency, and spiritual pride, and scheming hypocrisy, array themselves. Clearly if men are justified by their works, as S. James teaches,—or are condemned by them either,—it cannot be purely on account of the intrinsic nature of the works, but on account of the spirit in which they are done. The spirit which must inspire such words and works as will justify a man in God's eyes, is the spirit of faith. By faith alone are we justified, not by faith *plus* something else of a different and an opposite cha-

racter, such as "works of law" (Rom. iii. 28) would be. Faith truly lodged in the heart by the grace of God cannot fail to produce faithful works and words; and by such evidence of the vitality of our faith God will try us: but "works of law," done on the Semi-pelagian principle of which we have spoken,—done *proprio motu* with a view of ingratiating ourselves with God, to merit His justifying regard,—these are not only no sign of faith, but an indication of its absence, and therefore invite condemnation, not approval.

Faith, therefore, is that active principle of righteousness which, as we have said, must be infused into us before we can be accounted righteous before God. It is the abandonment of the false theory that we can set things right for ourselves, or make our own wills independent and self-supplying fountains of holiness. It casts us upon Him "who of God was made to us righteousness" (1 Cor. i. 30), as well as sanctification and redemption. Living communion with God and willing dependence upon Him would have been necessary to our justification if we had never fallen. It is at least equally necessary to us now that we are weak through the Fall. But our justification is the justification of men who are not only weak, but who have actually been guilty. The faith therefore which is required to justify us is not simply a general reliance upon the character of God. It includes a recognition of our sin, and a concurrence in God's judgment upon it; and it attaches itself with all its force to the Atonement made by Christ. However little the

sinner may be able to explain the nature of what Christ did for us upon the Cross, he apprehends by faith that Christ died for *him*, and that all his hopes lie in that one fact. He knows that, do what he would, he could not have delivered his soul from the guilt which by his own fault he had brought upon it, but that in a way known only to Christ and the Father, and to the Holy Spirit who applies the work of Christ, Christ has indeed done it. He has nothing to plead on his own behalf,—not his sorrow for sin, not his confession of it, not what he has done to make up for it,—but only that Christ has borne it, and shed His Blood for it. And as the thought of Christ's Atonement enters deeper and deeper into his heart, he naturally, without any forcing, dies to sin with Christ, so that sin actually loses its hold upon him, and becomes extinguished. Nor is this all. S. Paul includes as an element in saving faith the conviction "that God raised the Lord Jesus from the dead" (Rom. x. 9). It is not to a past fact that we cling, not to a dead Christ. It is to One living and triumphant, who not only thought of us and our sins upon the Cross, but who thinks of us now, and is not only near us, but in us. Such faith has more than the negative virtue of expelling sin; it has the positive virtue of appropriating the risen life of Christ. Realised union with Him, acquired by no merits of ours, but involving a willing conformity to Him, is assuredly a ground on which a righteous God can justify the greatest of sinners. Nor need He hold His justification in reserve until faith has had its perfect

work. The earliest beginnings of such a faith are met by a recognition that guilt has completely passed away, because that new principle which is at work in the soul is the pledge of future perfection.

It will be seen from the foregoing that there is a close connexion between Justification and Baptism. Sometimes, in Holy Scripture, justification is spoken of as a thing still future; then, it is, of course, in view of the day of final judgment. Sometimes it is spoken of as present, because the lives of true Christians pass continually under review before God, and He continually gives the same sentence upon them. But sometimes it is spoken of as a thing done once for all in the past. In that case it belongs to the moment when the believer first received incorporation into Christ,—the moment when "the old things passed away" (2 Cor. v. 17). After the Apostle has described the vileness of the natural life, he adds, "And such were some of you; but ye did wash, but ye were consecrated, but ye were justified in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God" (1 Cor. vi. 11). It is evident that he refers to the period of Baptism. There is no reason to doubt that justification is as freely given in the Baptism of infants as in that of grown men; but of course, on coming to years of discretion, the child must secure it for himself by active faith and obedience, lest it should slip from him.

§ 9.

"The work of righteousness," says the Evangelical Prophet, "shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever" (Isa. xxxii. 17). This is so in the normal state of things; but Protestant teachers have often confused and troubled consciences by identifying the objective and the subjective sides of justification. They speak of it sometimes as if "justification by faith" meant the soul's consciousness of its own justification. This is a great mistake, and has led to the opinion, often harshly insisted on, that no man is justified without knowing it. As we have already pointed out, justification is an act or attitude of God towards the soul; and it by no means follows of necessity that the soul realises what that attitude is. Thousands of souls are truly justified before God though living in great fear and doubt about their acceptance with Him. Nevertheless such souls are living beneath their privilege. "Having been justified by faith," says S. Paul, "let us have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. v. 1). It gives greater glory to God, and affords greater facility for progress in holiness, when the soul can boldly and humbly take God at His word, and rest peacefully upon the work of Christ, and, while grieving over its sins, grieve over them as forgiven and put away, not as a still incumbent burden. Such an assurance about its present state the soul ought to have. Assurance about the future is a very different thing.

§ 10.

That infusion of the new principle of righteousness which qualifies us for justification, is the beginning of the lifelong process which we understand by Sanctification. Here (as in the case of Conversion) we need not be tied by formal definitions, because the word with which we are dealing has no fixed theological value in the New Testament;—where it sometimes means an act of consecration, sometimes an act of purification, sometimes a recognition of holiness, as well as the process of which we have to speak. But we take it to mean the actual formation of a holy character, the progressive development of likeness to Christ. As such, the very idea is opposed to those spasmodic efforts by which some sectarians have sought to obtain it, as if it were a second gift like regeneration, a "baptism of the Holy Ghost" as they say, capable of being obtained and fixed in a moment. There are, no doubt, special seasons which serve as crises in the life of grace, when the soul,—as in a Retreat, for instance,—stirs itself up to be completely delivered to the Spirit of God. But character is not formed by isolated and convulsive movements,—though they may give an impetus to the formation,—but by constant practice and habitual exercise. Sanctification, therefore, is founded first in a regular and diligent use of the means of grace, whereby the Christian absorbs into himself the richness and strength of the life of Christ. Then, the virtues which have thus been taken into the spiritual system, must be put to

the proof and called out in the daily trials and duties which Providence appoints. Temptation is the natural way by which the Christian heart is at once tested and educated; and painful as the struggle with it is, the Apostle bids us count it "all joy" when we have to go through such temptation as comes to us by no fault of our own (S. James i. 2), because of the good result which it brings when rightly used. The name of temptation, however, must not be unduly restricted. There is not only a temptation to do wrong, but also to leave right alone; and the development of the Christian character consists equally in mortifying corrupt impulses and in giving free play to all wholesome ones. The talents committed to us must be made good use of, and we must become actively serviceable in the Church of God.

Sanctification is thus seen to be the deliberate work of the Christian man himself. He cannot be sanctified without his own diligent co-operation. And yet, on any true theory of grace, it is the work of the Holy Ghost upon him all the while. It is only by faith, not by "works," that a man is sanctified, inasmuch as any attempt to perfect ourselves independently of grace can only result in Pharisaism or Stoicism. The Imitation of Christ, therefore, must always be balanced by a living dependence upon Him.

In some measure the work of Sanctification must be going forward in all who are to be saved. The title of saints belongs in the New Testament to all the baptized, because they have all been set apart and consecrated. But the instinct of the Church has

inclined to reserve the title for those who may be called the elect of the elect,—for those in whom the power of grace has been most conspicuously shewn and has been most perfectly responded to. Even amongst the members of the Church, the Holy Ghost appears to find "chosen vessels," in whom He becomes more deeply interested than in the rest, as He sees them capable of a greater external work, or of a more exquisite internal finish. These are, in a special sense, the Saints. Amongst them there have been wide differences in experience and training, and none but the Divine eye is able to discern at the outset who will become Saints. God takes some of them from among the most apparently hardened sinners, like S. Paul, and S. Mary Magdalene, and S. Austin; while some are trained from infancy in ways of sweetness and purity, like the blessed Virgin herself, and S. Polycarp, and S. Bernard. Not all the Saints have been free from doctrinal errors; and there have been not a few instances where the grace of God has triumphed even over the obstacles of schism, and made true Saints who were not in visible communion with the Catholic Church. It is a rough and external standard which only reckons as Saints those who are attested to have worked miracles, and which canonizes mainly with a view to invocation. The Church on earth can make no final judgment amongst those that have passed into Paradise, but it is her duty to cherish the memory of those who have in other days borne signal witness to Christ.

§ 11.

The theory that a soul once in grace remains always in grace is only practically true and cannot be counted on infallibly. It is true that when the seed of eternal life has once germinated properly in a soul, and has made good growth, the soul itself becomes almost incapable of a final desertion of God. Grace obtains a hold upon it, and brings it into a new slavery,—that service of God which is perfect freedom. The soul is bound to Him by the recollection of such marvellous mercies, not merely heard of, believed in, hoped for, but actually enjoyed, that it cannot escape from their strong grip. They become a powerful factor in that complex setting which conditions a man's freedom. The man may be wayward and foolish, may plunge into sin and even abandon religious practices for a time; but somehow at last he remembers himself and comes back. This is almost invariably the case,—so much so, that wherever it appears to be otherwise, there is some ground for doubting whether the soul ever really knew the love of God, or had only deceived itself when it thought so. Something like a miracle of evil is needed, if a soul which has once truly embraced the Divine promises is to be torn away from them at last.

So far, as a matter of practical observation, there is truth in what is called the doctrine of final perseverance, and numbers of passages in Holy Scripture bear it out. But it is just when it passes from a fact of observation into a dogma of necessity that it

becomes false and pernicious. That same conscience which is serenely assured of God's present forgiveness and of God's unfaltering purpose with regard to it, and which cannot seriously think that it is likely to fall away from Him and lose its eternal life, yet bears witness that it might conceivably do so, and must take heed that it does not. The thing is no mechanical impossibility. Nay, a fearful experience of Satan's ways—his long sieges, and sudden assaults, and insidious deceits—and of its own repeated falls before them, shews the soul how readily it might be taken an irrecoverable captive. It dares not take things easily. If saved at all, it sees that it will be "scarcely saved" (1 Pet. iv. 18); and to the last it stands in fear. When it turns to the Bible, it finds its fears as faithfully echoed as its hopes. If on one page it reads, "They shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of My hand" (S. John x. 28), it reads on another, "It is impossible to renew unto repentance those who were once enlightened and tasted of the heavenly gift, and then fell away" (Heb. vi. 4–6).

Chapter XI.

The Last Things.

Probation closed by Death—The Intermediate State—The Resurrection of the Body—Christ's Second Coming and the Signs of it—Nature of the Last Judgment—The Bliss of Heaven—Relation of the Elect to the Mass of Mankind hereafter—State of the Lost—Final Triumph of Goodness.

§ 1.

This period of the earthly life is our time of probation; and so far as our present knowledge serves, there is no other. The moral bent is sufficiently exhibited here, and we have no warrant for teaching that it can be radically altered elsewhere. S. Austin lays it down, that no sacrifices which the Church can offer are of any avail for those who have departed without at least the rudiments of faith and repentance. The thought that impenitent wickedness will have another chance, or series of chances, hereafter, not only weakens the force of fear as a dissuasive from sin, but it appears to involve a loss in the opposite direction as well. If in some future state, men may change from fixed evil to good, it would seem arbitrary to deny that they might change from fixed good to evil. This would be intolerable to the Christian heart

and conscience, already sorely taxed. Faith demands, and Scripture gives it a right to demand, that the judgment founded upon conduct in this life should be eternal and final, and that probation should be at an end.

But this life is far more than a probation; it is an education, a discipline; and this aspect of existence by no means ceases at death. No unfair strain is put upon S. Paul's language by supposing that he distinctly contemplated a progressive work of grace in the soul between death and judgment. "I am confident," he says, "of this very thing, that He who began in you a good work will accomplish it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil. i. 6). While, therefore, we must hesitate to affirm that souls are still open to begin conversion in the Intermediate State, we may hope that many, in whom conversion was very imperfect here, will then be ripened to such a degree of perfection as they are found capable of. There is a wide difference between an unawakened state, and one of wilfully thwarting God's motions, or "doing despite unto the Spirit of Grace" (Heb. x. 29). For this latter unhappy class we are told of no fresh kinds of opportunity, and no ways of retrieving the past. But we may feel confident that those wills which were, at last, on the whole, upon the right side, though with no strong determination, will be saved by being hereafter subjected to some purifying and bracing action of God's love. He cannot cast away even the undeveloped germs, or the shrunken remains, of goodness.

In some cases—perhaps in many—where the soul

seems likely to forfeit the grace with which it has trifled, His vigilant Providence sends—when chastisement and diseases fail—a hastened and punitive death, "that we should not be condemned with the world" (1 Cor. xi. 32). To such a class of spirits, as it appears, our Lord presented Himself in the interval between His death and resurrection, and preached to them His Gospel (1 Pet. iii. 19, 20). God's outraged patience had at last found no resource, if the men were to be saved in the end, but to sweep them indignantly off the face of the earth. It may be that in the very fears and agonies of death some vital movement of will may have taken place,—some spiritual cry for mercy,—some one long breath of penitence, like that breath which makes the difference between a stillborn babe and one that has had a moment of separate existence. And that single flash of response to grace may have made the men capable of education and discipline in that "prison" to which they were removed. While death-bed repentances are in no way to be counted upon, they are always possible; and although they may not lead to anything more than the minimum of salvation, they at any rate avert the ultimate loss of the soul.

It is for this reason that the Church has always laid such stress—sometimes it almost looks like superstition—upon the moral and spiritual value of the last moments, seeking to stay the dying man's eyes and heart upon the Cross, and, even if the man himself be unconscious of outward things, surrounding him with the offices of religion, invoking from God the ministry

of angels, keeping intense the intercessions of the priesthood and of friends, and even appealing by the passing bell to the sympathetic help of strangers. It is not only that the moment of death has its special temptations and dangers,—Satan using what he knows to be his last chance, and the soul itself in many cases becoming sensible of an awful loneliness;—it is not only that the moment of death, especially for those who have shewn little previous sign of grace, is, as we have said, a moment of unique hopefulness. Death is the last test of the soul's direction. God does not judge us by the way we die, but by the way we live; nevertheless, as any previous crisis in a man's history reveals what the man has been making of himself up to that point, so also, but in a higher degree, does death. The way we have lived is gathered up—not for man's judgment but for God's—in the way we die

§ 2.

But little is revealed to us concerning the condition of those who die in grace, in the interval between death and resurrection. Much knowledge on the subject would be both impossible and unprofitable for us now. But enough light is vouchsafed us to direct our own conduct, and to give us comfort in thinking of our departed friends. Their state or abode sometimes bears the title of Paradise (S. Luke xxiii. 43), carrying us back to the secluded and sinless happiness of the first beginnings of our race; sometimes Abraham's bosom (S. Luke xvi. 22), which makes us

think of the maintenance of the covenant relation with God, and of the protecting patronage of our great forefathers in the faith. Sometimes,—and mainly in quotations from the Old Testament,—it is simply called Hades, or Hell, answering to the Hebrew Sheol,—a negative word which would include the state of all departed spirits, both good and bad, but which is never used without a sense of privation and incompleteness, easily passing into the darker thoughts of punishment and torment (Rev. xx. 13; S. Luke xvi. 23). Once, a special class of "souls" are described as lodged "beneath the altar," which is perhaps identical with the Throne (Rev. vi. 9). The description appears to indicate the sacrificial nature of their martyrdom, as well as their special nearness to the Lamb; while it suggests also a kind of confinement from which the souls would be glad to be freed.

The first characteristic of Christian death is its restfulness. "They rest from their labours" (Rev. xiv. 13). In one aspect of it, this repose belongs to good and bad alike, and is simply the result of their disembodied condition.[1] The body is the instrument

[1] It has been argued by some that, although the natural body is in abeyance and the spiritual body not yet given, the spirit is clothed meanwhile with some temporary organism which relieves its sense of nakedness. But such is not the meaning of S. Paul in the passage to which reference is made, but rather the opposite. The Apostle is weary of the "tabernacle" life of this world, and, if it must be so, would rather be "absent from the body" in order to be "present with the Lord." But there was a third alternative, which, if he might, he would choose before either. It was that there should be no need to be stripped at all, no interval between the tabernacle and the heavenly house. He wished that Christ might return before he died, and that instead of putting off his earthly dress, he might be "clothed *upon*,"

of moral action; and when once it is taken away, the man, for weal or for woe, has reached that "night," which our Lord speaks of, "when no man is able to work" (S. John ix. 4). Every one has had his "twelve hours" (S. John xi. 9) to work in upon earth, and now he must rest perforce until the new morning comes, and leave all practical occupation. The whirl of this busy life is at an end. And the body is also the medium of passive impressions. These, too, are left behind. The dead are at rest from the confusing and distracting succession of interests and excitements, of sensuous pains and pleasures. No fresh temptations can assail them. If they cannot break out into new action, nothing can break in, to disturb them with new troubles. It is this absolute stillness of the dead which makes us unable, except in symbols and poetry, to picture to ourselves the life of Paradise. Purely spiritual existence is to us an unimaginable thing. All we can say about it is that every circumstance of life with which we are acquainted is directly reversed.

But it would be totally at variance with Scripture to suppose that the departed, because they are incapable of positive commerce with the outer world, must therefore be in a state of swoon or abeyance. No such notion is intended when they are said in the Bible to have fallen asleep, or to have been laid to rest (κοιμηθῆναι). The word is expressive of repose,

that is, that the new vesture might come down upon the old and transform it into itself, "in order that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life" (2 Cor. v. 1-9).

but not of vacancy. As Christ, on passing out of this world into "Hell," was "quickened in spirit" (1 Pet. iii. 18), so are others. The spirit is set at rest from outward activities and impressions in order that it may be free to develope a whole world of inward consciousness. It is shut up within itself, that it may have no alternative but to contemplate deeper facts. Here, we have had hard work to recall ourselves from what is phenomenal to what is real. But to the dead the task is easy. It is their sole occupation. Having no outlet of escape, such as we have, into the amusements of temporal existence, they sound the things which are eternal. The "breadth" and the "length" which S. Paul speaks of, through which they have roamed before and through which they will roam again more freely hereafter, are now inaccessible to them; and their range lies in exploring that "depth" which S. Athanasius explained to be the realm of the dead (Eph. iii. 18).

Now it is impossible to suppose that spirits can be all at once confronted with the essential verities of existence without experiencing emotion. When no veil, no medium, no sacrament is any longer interposed, but things are borne in upon the naked consciousness, just as they are; when it is no longer possible for the truth to be evaded, or disguised, or misapprehended; then comes an awakening, which even for the Saints must mingle terror with joy. In proportion, no doubt, as men have lived in the light of the Gospel on earth, there will be less surprise in the revelation which death makes, and the delight

of finding the truth of those things which were believed will overpower the pain of discovering what was before unperceived. Yet the vision must have in it something appalling even for the holiest. S. Paul had had a foretaste of Paradise (2 Cor. xii. 4); and he spoke of that awful "depth," which must then have opened before him, as a thing formidable enough to make the soul reel, and lose its hold, if it were not for the love of God in Christ which embraces and supports it (Rom. viii. 39). Although he was assured that passing out of the body would bring him home to Christ, yet he shrank from the necessity, and felt that it needed courage (*θαρροῦμεν*) to choose such an exposure in preference to the life of earth (2 Cor. v. 8).

Among the facts which come most vividly before the consciousness of the departed, are those connected with the mystery of their own being. For the first time, the man fully realises what he is, and how he came to be what he is. The whole history of God's merciful dealings with him, and of his own narrow escapes from self-perdition, rises up before him. He learns now what his sins have cost, in the strong light of the Presence of Him who bore them. "Thou hast set our misdeeds before Thee," says the funeral Psalm, "and our secret sins in the light of Thy countenance" (Ps. xc. 8). The fact that that Countenance beams upon the pardoned sinner with love surpassing all previous conception, does not take away from him all remorse for his wrongdoing. On the contrary, it adds poignancy to it. Death ushers

the Christian into a state of profound penitence. While he was on earth, his penitence was mixed with alarms for his salvation, which relieved the sense of the intrinsic horribleness of the sin. But when all anxiety about the future is over, the spirit is able disinterestedly to enter into the feelings of the holy Redeemer with regard to the sins which He bore. It then understands the prophetic promise; "that thou mayest remember, and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more, because of thy shame, when I am pacified toward thee for all that thou hast done" (Ezek. xvi. 63). And whereas on earth penitence was able in some measure to appease its cravings by earnest action, it no longer has that resource. S. Bernard well points out,—though he has chiefly the lost in view,—how keen a difference the absence of the body makes; so that the man is forced to taste the hatefulness of his acts without being able to repair them (*paenitentiam haberi, non agi*). No purgatorial flames that are imagined, could cause such anguish as this sword of penitence which both rends and mends the soul.

The doctrine of Purgatory as taught in the Roman communion expresses these truths in a parable; but it also introduces ideas which are quite foreign to the Gospel. There are, no doubt, diversities of discipline to be undergone between death and judgment, suited to the diversities of those who are to be disciplined; but such a purgatory as Scripture teaches us to think of has nothing retributive in it. It is not different from Paradise. The spirit passes into no more exile

from the face of Christ, or from His felt grasp. "The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and there shall no torment touch them" (Wisd. iii. 1). All that is sharp in it is of the spirit's voluntary and natural self-infliction, by the help of grace. There are few good Christians who think that they have had penitence enough in this life. As a rule, they long to have a deeper sense of their forgiven sins, and would desire some space for reflexion and recollection, some leisure for purging and shriving, before presenting themselves for the final judgment. Such an opportunity is given, when our Lord says to the departing faithful, "Come, My people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee; hide thyself for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast" (Isa. xxvi. 20).

The life of Paradise being lived in memory on the one hand, and in expectation on the other, can hardly be said to have a present. "Their works follow them;" so the Apocalypse describes the one aspect of it:—"And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord?" so it describes the other. Where successive actions are impossible, and the seasons of the natural world are not felt, our temporal divisions are unknown. To speak, as in the language of Indulgences, of years or days in this connexion, must be purely figurative, if it has any sense at all. Whatever measurements the spirits of the departed have, must be of a subjective and internal kind. In all probability it is the same to them whether a thousand years have elapsed on

earth since they left it, or only a few minutes. When, therefore, we speak of their state as a state of progress and education, we do not tie ourselves to an earthly mode of progress, gauged by length of time. There is no reason to suppose that the Saints pass through their intermediate state more quickly, in the temporal sense of the word, than ordinary Christians, or enter the joys of heaven before the end of the world.

The strange isolation of the dead from all external intercourse with other persons and things does not really make them solitary. It leads them to a far more profound communion with each other and with us. In this life we only guess at the meaning of the Fellowship of the Holy Ghost. They know it by a direct experience. Here, we conjecture one another's meaning through signs and words and looks, and often misinterpret them. There, they read clearly, seeing the truth of things in Christ. The outward events of this world's history do not affect them; but the spiritual bearings of those events no doubt affect them deeply.

This is involved in their relations with Christ, the closeness of which is brought out in every passage of Scripture which deals with the subject at all. When the believer dies, he "goes to rest through Jesus" (1 Thess. iv. 14), because it is Jesus that prepares his place of repose and conducts him to it. He "dies in the Lord" (Rev. xiv. 13), because death does not carry him outside of that sacred union in which he has lived. His parting cry is, "Lord Jesu, receive

my spirit" (Acts vii. 59), because, however great the submission to Christ has been before, the spirit now springs absolutely into His keeping, to have no independent life of its own. Yet it is not lost in Him. It departs to "be with Christ" (σύν, Phil. i. 23), as still a separate personality, capable of enjoying the privilege of being in the same place where He is. And He promises that it shall "be with" Him in more than a local sense in Paradise (μετ' ἐμοῦ, S. Luke xxiii. 43): it shall have a sense of companionship with Him, and of sharing His fortunes. Nor does the spirit of the believer feel that its sojourn there in His company is either precarious or unobserved. He is "at home with the Lord" (ἐνδημῆσαι πρός, 2 Cor. v. 8), in reciprocal intercourse with Him, in mansions which are his true and native abode, because they are Christ's to begin with. When his stay in that particular "mansion" of the Father's house is ended, "God will bring" him, still "with Jesus" (1 Thess. iv. 14), to that more complete state in which body and spirit together will have the fruition of eternal fellowship with Christ.

No prayers which we can offer for the Christian dead accord better with this view than that which the English Church puts in our lips, that God's kingdom may be hastened, so that they and we alike may have our perfect consummation, both in body and soul. But any other petitions which we please to offer for them, we may freely offer, provided that we offer them subject to those general laws of prayer which have been laid down elsewhere. It is a cruel wrong to Christian

mourners when they are deterred from pouring out their hearts in prayer for the dead. God is a Father, and would have us tell Him everything we feel. If there is any desire in our minds which we dare not bring to Him, we ought not to retain it at all. Everything that we may legitimately wish for, we may reverently ask. We may not ask for things which God makes it plain that He does not will,—such as the return of the dead to this corruptible life, or communication with them in superstitious and forbidden ways. Nor ought we to make definite petitions based on uncertain knowledge of the facts, or at least we must make them with great reserve. But it is safe, with S. Paul, to ask for the departed "mercy in that day" (2 Tim. i. 18), or with the Psalmist, that they and their past afflictions may be "remembered" (Ps. cxxxii. 1). Rest, peace, refreshment; light perpetual, the favour of the Divine regard; a portion with the Saints; a joyful resurrection and a merciful judgment;—these are the kind of requests which ancient piety was accustomed to make for them. Nor can it be unavailing and superfluous to offer such prayers. No doubt a disproportionate amount of time and energy has sometimes been devoted to them, and in the fifteenth century the deliverance of the dead from the pains of purgatory seemed to have become the main object of the Mass. The dead do not need the succour of the prayers of the living in the same way as those do who are still liable to temptation, and whose salvation is not yet assured. But our prayers are of use to them in their progress.

To omit the mention of them in the devotions of the Christian Church on earth would imply that all connexion between them and us had ceased. Nothing could be more untrue.

§ 3.

The Church knows no special doctrine of the Immortality of the Soul, such as philosophers have imagined. Her doctrine is that of the future Immortality of the Man. Though she teaches the continuous existence and consciousness of the spirit in Paradise, the man, during that period, must be regarded as dead. So our Blessed Lord says of Himself, "I am the living one, and I became dead; and behold, I am living for evermore" (Rev. i. 18). But as death is not annihilation, so the return to life is not the recovery of anything so unsatisfying as existence without a body would be to men. Life, in Christian language, is a more vigorous and substantial thing. Human life requires an organism for its completion and manifestation; and therefore any doctrine of human immortality must presuppose a Resurrection of the Body. When arguing with the Sadducees, who rejected the belief, our Lord convicted them of a great and twofold error. They erred concerning "the power of God," not believing that He was able to raise the dead to life, because they had no notion of any bodily life that could transcend this; and they erred in "not knowing the Scriptures." The reasoning of Jesus from the Scriptures is not immediately clear, but the very assumptions which it makes are most

instructive. Many years after the death of the Patriarchs, He says, God still speaks of Himself as their God. It might have been supposed that He called Himself so because He was their God while they lived. But deeper reflexion shews that such a bond as had been formed between God and the Patriarchs could not be a momentary and perishable thing. Creatures so made in the image of God as to be capable of friendship with Him, and actually admitted to it, could not pass out of existence and be forgotten. Therefore Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were still alive;—indeed it was the case with all the dead, "for all live unto Him." But this involves a still further thought. If those Patriarchs, though dead, are still alive, not as memories in the retrospect of God, but as personal existences, it must be by virtue of a coming resurrection. The spirit of Abraham by itself is not Abraham, any more than the body of Abraham is. Therefore, if God is Abraham's God, and not a God of the dead but of the living, He must have in reserve for His friend a return to life, certainly not less rich and full than the life of earth, and therefore clothed in a fitting body.

The nature of the resurrection body is to be learned from the descriptions given us of our Lord's own Body after the resurrection; and by S. Paul's deductions from the same. It was by rising from the dead Himself that Christ "lighted up life and incorruption" (2 Tim. i. 10). There are two cautions which must reverently be borne in mind, however, in applying to ourselves what was seen in Him.

First, His Body was the Body of the Incarnate Word; and as He was able to do with it, even before death, what other men cannot do, so it may have been afterwards. And on the other hand, His Body, during the forty days, was not seen in the final state of glorification, but only in the initial stage of its return from death. Yet with this twofold reserve we may find an abundance of instruction to gather concerning our own future. His Body was seen, and felt, to be a real body,—He does not say of "flesh and blood,"—but of "flesh and bones" (S. Luke xxiv. 39). It was still in such relations with this material universe, that His disciples "ate and drank with Him after that He rose from the dead" (Acts x. 41). It was undoubtedly the same Body with which He had been born and had lived and died, not a different one. In token of this, He shewed them His hands, His feet, and His side, where there were still traces of the death which He had suffered (S. Luke xxiv. 39; S. John xx. 20). Upon this identity of His resurrection Body with His natural Body, He even bases the proof of His own personal identity,—"that it is I Myself,"—as if He could not have been Himself, had He appeared in another body. And yet the changes which have taken place in it are no less remarkable than the signs of continuity. It is not always and at once to be recognised, even by those who are familiar with Him, either by look, or by tones of voice. Some sort of spiritual preparation is required in order to be on a perfect understanding with it. Once we even read of His appearing "in a different form"

(S. Mark xvi. 12). Even on an occasion when they were expecting Him, and had been appointed to meet Him, "some were in two minds" when He appeared, not knowing what to make of it (S. Matt. xxviii. 17). If still able to draw breath from the air, and to eat the food which was given, and to walk upon the ground, Christ's resurrection Body was not tied to these things. In a chamber where no door is opened, He suddenly starts into view (S. John xx. 26). He no less suddenly "vanishes out of sight" (S. Luke xxiv. 31) when it pleases Him. His Body is able at will to move upwards through the air (Acts i. 9).

Such are some of the indications which Christ vouchsafed to give us of the relations of the resurrection body to this in which we now are. S. Paul carries our knowledge a little further, by a parable and by a generalisation. He likens the difference between the present earthly body and that which will develope from it to the difference between the naked grain which is sown and the plant which springs out of it. The seed appears to be hopelessly disintegrated; but it pleases God to re-embody the life which in germ existed in it, and that, after no capricious fashion. An invariable law connects the seed sown with the springing plant, and, although science may be unable to inform us why, the grain of wheat produces wheat and the grain of barley, barley. So the body which a man will wear hereafter will be "his own body" (1 Cor. xv. 38),—by no means on account of an identity of component particles, or of similar configuration, but because it is

the only one which could issue out of that aggregate of faculties and relations called now his body, so employed as he has employed it. But the organism which is to clothe the man at the resurrection differs far more from the present body than the plant from the seed. Not only is it more beautiful, and stronger "in glory" and "in power;"—"it is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruptibility." There is no fear lest it should again droop and decay and die. The man has at length reached true immortality. For, to sum up the whole contrast in a word, the body which was "sown a natural body, is raised a spiritual body" (1 Cor. xv. 44). That is the great distinction. Whereas on earth the man was "in the flesh," and in Paradise "in the spirit," he now finds the perfect union between the two, when the spirit which has learned all that the world of pure spirit has to teach it comes again into a body which never limits or thwarts it, but which absolutely fulfils all its behests without difficulty. Those who are still alive at our Lord's coming will experience the same change without passing through death.

Although "all men shall rise again with their bodies," yet such a resurrection as this is only given to the faithful. It is the special privilege of those who have learned to make our Lord's flesh their meat (S. John vi. 54). This is that "resurrection from the dead" (ἐξανάστασις ἡ ἐκ νεκρῶν, Phil. iii. 11) which saints long and labour to attain. In contradistinction to them, the wicked, though they return likewise from the merely spiritual state, still remain

among the dead.[1] Such bodies as they receive correspond to their moral and spiritual condition, and therefore contribute nothing to their freedom or fulness of life, but on the contrary, bear witness to their inward disorganization and decay. If we could adopt what appears to be the most direct grammatical translation of one hard text, it would seem to suggest that some men, too far gone in natural corruption to be capable of the full "resurrection of life," yet not so wilfully wicked as to deserve "the resurrection of damnation" (S. John v. 29), would be permitted to continue a disembodied existence, apart from other men, but not apart from God (1 Pet. iv. 6). Possibly something of a like nature underlies our Lord's saying about those who should "enter into life maimed, or halt, or having one eye" (S. Mark ix. 43–47). Something of the man's history must be visible in his very appearance.

[1] The popular notion that there will be separate resurrections of the faithful and the wicked, at distant times, is founded on a misconception of the figurative language of the Apocalypse. "The first resurrection" (Rev. xx. 5) appears to indicate that rising to new power, by which the saints influence the Church after their death. It has been treated of in this work on p. 234. The study of the lives and teaching of the saints by after generations gives them a share with Christ in His supreme rule over the world now. Another and more usual interpretation is that the "first resurrection" is the awakening to newness of life which is given to the faithful through their Baptism (comp. 1 Pet. i. 3). But whatever else it may mean, the character of the Apocalypse forbids a literal acceptance of the words. When S. Paul says (1 Thess. iv. 16), "The dead in Christ shall rise first," it is clear from the original at a glance that he does not contrast them with other dead who shall rise after, but with the quick who are to be transformed: "Then we which are alive and remain." S. Paul is just reversing the opinion which had gained ground at Thessalonica that "we which are alive and remain . . . should *prevent* them which are asleep."

§ 4.

The general resurrection takes place at the Last Day. It accompanies the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Indeed, it may almost be said to *be* His coming; for as we have pointed out elsewhere, the Second Advent of Christ does not mean that He returns to our level, but that we are caught away to His. Instead of subjecting Himself again to our earthly senses, He gives, "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye," to quick and dead alike, those new faculties of the resurrection body by which to apprehend His Presence,—that Presence which ever since His Ascension has been among us, but perceived only by faith.

That such a Coming awaits the world is one of the clearest revelations of the Gospel. Recently, men have been drawn with much profit to consider, more definitely than before, some less extraordinary facts and events in the Church's life as Comings of our Lord. He comes in the Sacraments, and in His Word. He comes to the soul at death. He comes to the Church in those great moments, like the Fall of Jerusalem, the Conversion of Constantine, the Reformation, which we rightly call *crises* or acts of decision and judgment. But these all are but tentative and preliminary Comings. They form points of transition from one scene in the long tragedy to another. But we still wait for a great *dénouement*, which will give an appropriate and artistic close to it all, gathering

up in one final catastrophe all that the minor Advents have prefigured.

The date at which the great Advent will take place is entirely unknown to us. It cannot be calculated from the symbolical numbers of S. John; nor can the most spiritual discernment be sure of reading unerringly the signs of its approach. If, in reaction from the profane curiosity which delights to make out the day and hour, we hold that it is still far distant, our very thinking so is more of a sign that it is at hand than otherwise; for the one thing certain about the date is that it will throw out all computations, "for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of Man cometh" (S. Matt. xxiv. 44). Assuredly Christ will not come till the very moment of the "fulness of the times," any more than at His first coming. But if the world does not yet appear ripe for the end, no one can calculate how long or short a time might be needed for the ripening. "One day is with the Lord as a thousand years" (2 Pet. iii. 8); and events might move with an appalling rush if it pleased Him to give the impulse. The ingredients are all in the cup; it only needs the addition of some drop to resolve and precipitate them. There is but one lesson which our Lord inculcates on every mention of His Coming,—to be always watching for it, and never to acquiesce in the belief that it is far away.

It is dangerous to fix too closely the meaning of those warnings which were given by Christ upon the Mount of Olives, and afterwards developed by S. John in Patmos, but the preparation for the Advent ap-

pears to lie in two main directions, natural and historical. The resurrection of the dead, and the transformation of the still living, will not take place on an unchanged theatre. There is too close a connexion between man and the world for that. Christ speaks of "signs in the sun and in the moon and in the stars" (S. Luke xxi. 25), and S. Peter of "fire" and "fervent heat," which will dissolve this present fabric (2 Pet. iii. 7, 10, 12), and prepare the way for a new. Whatever may be the form of those last convulsions of the visible order, both revelation and science lead us to believe that as this world had a beginning, so it must have an end. The end, however, is a new and more glorious beginning again. Creation, which has, by no fault of its own, shared in the degradation and misery of man, shares also in the benefits wrought out by Jesus Christ. When "the redemption of our body" comes, then "creation also shall be emancipated from the slavery of decay into the freedom of the glory of the children of God" (Rom. viii. 20–23). The travail in which it now groans shall not be an unfruitful travail. It issues in that "regeneration" which was stated and left without explanation by our Lord (S. Matt. xix. 28).

And as Nature, through the sins of men on one hand, and their diligence and science on the other, as well as by processes of her own, is working up towards the Advent of her Redeemer and ours, so also is the history of man. By the spread of the Gospel among all nations (S. Matt. xxiv. 14), and by the subsequent reassumption of Israel (Rom. xi. 15), the way of

Christ's Coming is prepared. The Catholic Church refuses to enter into any vain speculations about a Millennium in which Christ is literally and visibly to reign upon earth among Saints already risen from the dead; but she has reason to expect that before the world is hurried to the final Judgment, wider triumphs will be allowed to her than she has yet seen. Great Oriental nations, as well as the simpler races of the islands and of Africa and America, have still to contribute to the fulness of her Catholicity. Her broken unity must be restored. And then she expects to have one last terrible combat with all the concentrated force which Satan can levy in the world, when good and evil will endeavour to disentangle themselves from each other and gain possession of the earth. Then, when the mysterious Rebel,—the Antichrist who, it may be, pretends to be the Christ,—shall have gathered head, and exhibited the utmost of his impious power, unrestrained, the Lord Jesus will be revealed, and "bring him to nought by the manifestation of His Presence" (2 Thess. ii. 8).

§ 5.

Impressive pictures of the Final Judgment are drawn for us in the Bible; and we can only conceive of it in a symbolical, apocalyptic form. Nevertheless it is as well to recognise that those pictures are not to be interpreted literally, and to endeavour to disengage some of the chief ideas which they represent.

The first element in a judgment is that of deciding

what has been in dispute. It is a clearing up of confused and uncertain questions. The matter of debate is examined, the witnesses heard and tested, a luminous review of the cause is given, and an authoritative conclusion drawn. But, although the principle is the same, there is no need to transfer to the Last Day every detail of human courts. No evidence will be called for, and there will be no pleading and counterpleading. In the light of Christ's appearing, all human history, in its most secret and intricate windings, will be made visible at a glance. It will be unnecessary to call attention to this or that fact, to point out circumstances here and there, to discuss and argue. Our Lord tells us that His Coming will be like a flash of lightning. When the lightning bursts out upon the night, it does not move slowly along from feature to feature of the landscape, but reveals the whole, from end to end, and from side to side, at once. So it will be in the Judgment Day (S. Luke xvii. 24). The motives which lay behind words and actions will be as plain as the words and actions themselves. What private and humble personages contributed to the development of the world and the Church will be seen in its true relation to the brilliant achievements of great statesmen, or generals, or ecclesiastics. It is sometimes asked by trembling souls whether repented and forgiven sins will be brought into the judgment. No other answer can be given but that saying of Christ, that "There is nothing covered up that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known" (S. Luke xii. 2); and that of S.

Paul, "Make no judgment before the time, until the Lord come, who will both throw light upon the hidden things of darkness, and manifest the counsels of the hearts" (1 Cor. iv. 5). Everything must come out, good and bad. But penitent souls will then rejoice that it is so. The revelation will do them no harm, nor cause them any uncertainty or fear. The sins disclosed are no longer *their* sins, and so far as *they* are concerned God has forgotten the sins. That moment will put the finishing touch to their own penitence, and along with the revelation of their former shame will come the revelation of the glory of Christ's love which it has been made to subserve and of the grace which has been able to turn it to account. Confessed and forsaken sin will be the most powerful evidence against the Accuser, who will find nothing to "lay to the charge of God's elect" (Rom. viii. 33).

Such a judgment, however, is more than a convincing exposure of the truth. It does not leave things where it found them. It shapes itself into an effective sentence. There is no more return, after that, to the state of mixture in which we now live. The "eternal judgment" (Heb. vi. 2) not only gives a speculative satisfaction regarding the past, but it is the dawn of a new day altogether, in which good and evil enter no more into conflict, but are finally separated from each other.

Against the decision then made there will be no appeal,—not simply because there is no higher authority to appeal to, but because the truth will be so

self-evidently shewn that none can dispute it. Those who are condemned will condemn themselves, and those who are justified will see the grounds of their justification. For the Judge is not only one who knows all things in their bearings with a Divine omniscience, and weighs them in the scales of a Divine righteousness:—the same perfect, representative, once-tempted human nature which qualified Him to be "a merciful High-priest and a faithful" (Heb. ii. 17), qualifies Him also to be a faithful and a merciful Judge. There could indeed be no difference, either in strictness or in tenderness, between the Father's judgment and that of Jesus Christ. Nevertheless, it is to Him, as the responsible Head of the human race, that all decision affecting the human race is assigned. "The Father judgeth none, but hath given the entire judgment to the Son, . . . because He is Son of Man" (S. John v. 22, 27).

§ 6.

When even S. John the Divine acknowledged that he was unable to guess what the children of God would develope into (1 John iii. 2), it would be worse than idle to dogmatize upon the future state of the blessed. The glory of it infinitely transcends all power of imagination, even when quickened by a life-long experience of the Divine goodness towards the saints on earth. To those who have felt what it is to be under the guilt and power of sin, it is enough to fill the heart with "joy unspeakable and full of glory" even to contemplate

that one aspect of it which is suggested by the word salvation (1 Pet. i. 9). Salvation is a word which draws its splendour from a contrast. It makes us think of the danger we were in,—of the certain perdition which awaited us, if it had not been for our Saviour. The whole life of grace, indeed, is a life of gradually realised salvation, and throughout our pilgrimage we keep (in S. Peter's language), "receiving" it; but it is only when the last trial has been surmounted, and the eternal judgment pronounced, that the soul can be thought of as fully saved. Then, looking back upon the sins of life as purged, and its labours all without damage accomplished, the white-robed and palm-bearing company will acknowledge the completeness of what they possess, and to whom they owe it: "Salvation unto our God that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb" (Rev. vii. 10). There is nothing ignoble in the seeking of salvation; and men who blame Christians for it, as if they were pursuing a sordid and selfish object, can have entered but little into the wholesome fears which the teaching of Christ inspires. An instinct of self-preservation lies in the very springs of life, and must shew itself in spiritual and eternal concerns as much as in earthly. Our Lord and His Apostles constantly appeal to it. It only becomes unworthy, when men seek the salvation of their souls by methods which will never lead to it, namely by neglect of duties and by uncharitable isolation. Yet, in spite of its all-important greatness, salvation describes only the negative side of that which Christ

has procured for His people. The future glory is a positive thing. Salvation is our rescue from the consequences of the Fall. Glory is the destiny for which God created men in Christ without reference to the Fall.

Without attempting anything like an account of the heavenly glory of the children of God, it will be safe to say that it must include a fourfold perfection. Those who attain it will be perfect in themselves, and in perfect relation with God, with the world in which they are, and with their brethren.

To be perfect in themselves, is to have true freedom, so that they may follow out to the full what is natural to them. Their constitution itself will no longer impose an irksome restriction. They could not be happy without some medium through which to act and to be acted upon; nor with a medium inadequate to their wishes. But the spiritual body will give them all that they require. No conflict will arise, as now, between flesh and spirit. There will be no inertness, or weariness, or weakness, or pain, or disease, or anything connected with decay. Nor will there be any need of vigilance against corrupt desires; for the body being absolutely under the control of the will, and the will itself being perfectly guided by the conscience, and the conscience irradiated by the direct light of love, all power of temptation will be at an end. The whole man will move together in all that he does, with an inward unity like the unity of God. Faculties beyond anything

which can now be guessed at, will be wielded without effort by a central authority, itself sure and sound, with the confident health of a holiness which nothing can seduce.

Such perfect soundness of the redeemed soul within itself will be at once the condition and the result of a perfect relation to God. "Without sanctification no man shall see the Lord" (Heb. xii. 14); and yet he cannot attain the sanctification except by seeing Him. "We know that if He appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is" (1 John iii. 2). The Beatific Vision of God in Christ will have the power to transform those who are admitted to it, in proportion to their power of taking it in. As it will be perpetually before their eyes, and they will never for an instant lose sight of it again, their power of taking it in will be perpetually increased; and they, in consequence, will still, in heaven, be more and more "transformed into the same image from glory to glory" (2 Cor. iii. 18). All will not be accomplished at the first glance. It is only true up to a certain point to say that the day of faith and hope will be over, because they are swallowed up in sight (2 Cor. v. 7; Rom. viii. 24). Faith and hope, like charity, are among the things which will "abide," even when the saints know as they were known (1 Cor. xiii. 12, 13), because there will always remain an infinity of blessed experience to be drawn from that inexhaustible fountain of goodness; and as age passes after age, it will seem to the redeemed as if they were only just beginning

to appreciate the glory of God, and only just beginning to be capable of appreciating it. The eternal life of the saints consists in the knowledge of God, in heaven as on earth, and there is no limit that we are aware of, at which that eternal life will cease to expand and increase in strength.

Perfect in themselves, and in perfect relation to God, they will live in perfect surroundings. Those "new heavens and new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" (2 Pet. iii. 13), will give them a never-ending field for enjoyment, and wonder, and thanksgiving. Heaven is not a place, it is true; but it expresses a whole world of things with which the blessed will be connected. The delight which God here accords to the senses will be found there in its glorified and spiritual counterpart. Far as the Christian imagination of heaven is removed from anything sensuous, we are not required to represent it to our minds as so severely spiritual, so unmixedly a kingdom of ideas, that the simple and unintellectual and childlike would find no attraction in thinking of it. There will be transformed objects to correspond with the transformed body; and the relation to them will be a perfect relation,—of mastery, not subjection,—of free and restful delight, not of bewildered snatching here and there. And, unless we wrongly interpret some passages of the New Testament, our relation to the glorified world will not be one of ethical freedom only, but of direct control and government. We are destined to take that place with regard to nature which is now occupied by the angels. Ourselves

made "equal unto angels" (S. Luke xx. 36) in those respects in which now we fall short of them,—in spirituality, in concentration, in reach of understanding, in orderliness, in holiness, in devotion,—we shall be able perfectly to fulfil those functions which were contained in the charge given to man at his beginning (Gen. i. 28). It may even be that those faculties which now are employed in artistic interpretation and imaginative invention may become a power of actual creation, and that new realms may be framed through the children of God to the glory of their Father.

The mutual relations between those who are saved will be no less perfect than their relations to renovated nature. Perfected union of all men in Christ is a main part of the glory to which we look forward. But little is told us of special joys for individual souls in heaven; the teaching of Scripture is mainly occupied with what is common to all. It would, indeed, be most false to suggest that the several personalities of men will cease to exist, and that nothing will remain but a general consciousness of the race,—whatever that might be. S. Peter will for ever be S. Peter, and S. Paul, S. Paul, each with his own continuous experience, which none can share with him at first hand. This is contained in the promise of the "white stone, and upon the stone a new name written which no man knoweth but he that receiveth it" (Rev. ii. 17). But the joyful experience of each soul will pass on into the joy of all. Even here, Christians are sufficiently knit into one body to be affected by one another's sufferings and delights. But

the sympathy which is here a matter of deliberate and difficult attainment, and most imperfectly realised even among those who stand nearest to each other, will then be instinctive and universal. Whereas now the union of Christ's members is a matter of faith and hope, it will then be a matter of realised consciousness and of sight. Love will go out from soul to soul in the same strong and satisfying manner in which it moves in the Blessed Trinity itself. All those peculiarities which in this life repel and hinder confidence will be done away. Hearts will be all open to each other. No false reserve will any longer conceal the motive which prompts every thought and action: "His name shall be upon their foreheads" (Rev. xxii. 4).

If personality is preserved in heaven, it is evident at once that there will be no dead level of blessedness among the redeemed, but that inequalities will still remain. In the Gospel parable, each labourer receives the same reward, because all receive the salvation of their souls, and all are blessed up to their full capacity of blessedness. But the souls thus saved are still widely different from each other,—not in sinlessness, for all will be sinless,—but in depth of character, in powers, in versatility, in receptiveness. All are glorified, and each one will rejoice in his own particular glory without envying another's, but the glory of all cannot be alike (1 Cor. xv. 41). There is, for example, the glory of the innocence which was never lost, remaining eternally distinct from the glory of the cleansed penitent (Rev. xiv. 3, 4). And as with

moral characteristics, so also with the intellectual. There will be the glory of the simple-minded, and the glory of the scientific. Mere acquirements, indeed, will go for very little, and many that have been first in this life will be last there, and the last first,—if they were last only for lack of opportunity; but natural bent, and diligent self-culture, must assuredly receive their appropriate consecration and perfection. In like manner—although all that is physical and earthly in such distinctions passes away—distinctions like those of sex, and nationality, which enter into the very essence of souls, cannot be utterly obliterated. And ties which have bound souls closely together in this life, like those of husband and wife, mother and son, friend and friend, will retain, in the altered circumstances, all that was inward and of eternal value, and will be glorified with the glory of the souls which they connect. Even on earth, such relationships are not stationary, but change their outward features from year to year, and Mary's attitude towards Jesus, and His to her, was not the same on Calvary as it had been at Nazareth; still less is it the same now; but every instinct of the heart rebels against supposing that Mary in heaven will be no more to Jesus than any other holy woman, and that she will remember her motherhood as only a strange dream of the past.

Perfect mutual relations among souls so widely different necessitate the ideas of authority and subordination. Such ideas are commended to our minds when the glorified Church is represented to us, not as

a Garden of Eden, with its lonely scenery, but as a City, a "new Jerusalem" (Rev. xxi. 2). Our Lord, in figurative language, said that His Apostles should judge,—that is, should rule,—the "twelve tribes" of His new Israel (S. Matt. xix. 28). He spoke of some being set to govern ten cities, and others five (S. Luke xix. 17, 19), in proportion to the faithfulness with which they had acquitted themselves in a simple office of trust on earth. Thus good work is rewarded by further opportunities of good work. It is altogether beyond us to guess in what kind of way such ruling spirits will be able to benefit those who are put under them, in a state where all are blessed beyond fear of failure; but in whatever way it may be, it is at least certain that the rule will be like that of Christ Himself,—one of loving watchfulness, of meek and unselfasserting serviceableness (S. Luke xxii. 25, 26),—one in which priesthood is not forgotten in the organizing work of kingship (Rev. i. 6).

§ 7.

And here, perhaps, may come in what was observed concerning those who in this life were not among the elect, and yet cannot be classed among the reprobate. There is a special sense in which salvation belongs only to the Church, but the Apostle's language suggests that in a different sense it may belong to others also (1 Tim. iv. 10). Christians are regarded by S. James as "a kind of firstfruits of God's creatures" (S. James i. 18). It follows that there must be a harvest of some kind to come afterwards. How ex-

tensive that harvest may ultimately be we are not told; but there is no difficulty in supposing that it includes all those who, in the midst of false beliefs and heathen superstitions and heartless philosophies, have endeavoured to live worthy of the human name, with some better and more kindly desires than those which selfishness dictates. Thus our Saviour tells us of the judgment by which He will judge the nations—that is, the mass of mankind, outside the line of the Chosen People, Jewish or Christian. While the test for the elect is of a higher character, as shewn in the Parables of the Virgins and of the Talents, the test for the nations, gathered like unenlightened animals before their Judge (S. Matt. xxv. 32), is that of simple humanity. If they have been actively kindhearted towards those in need, they are saved. Not that such persons, any more than we, have atoned for their faults by their good works, or are "saved by the law or sect which they have professed." Jesus Christ is their Saviour; and their actions have shewn a rudimentary faith in Him. Though they little knew whom they were befriending, they were befriending Him. They were not yet made partakers of His Nature, but He was already partaker of theirs,—and by thus claiming their place as true human beings, they became without knowing it, eternally attached to Him. They were "of the truth," and they learn to their surprise that the Voice which they obeyed was His (S. John xviii. 37). Everything that is really human belongs to Christ, and is saved by Him; and we may be sure that if any one who was once human

is finally lost, it must be because such an one has finally destroyed in himself that which made him truly a man, refusing the likeness of God and at last ceasing to bear His image. But it is not probable that those whom the inscrutable Providence of God has left in darkness in this life will rise all at once into the full stature of those who were chosen to be His children. There will still be an inner and an outer circle among the saved. The Church will even then have a mission to those who are not yet wholly incorporated into her, but are willing to become her tributaries, her subject allies. "And the nations shall walk through her light, and the kings of the earth bring their glory into her" (Rev. xxi. 24). And so, perhaps, through one æon after another, those who shared the Cross of Christ upon earth may keep ahead of others who follow as they advance, and may be the means of revealing the wonders of the everlasting Gospel to world after world.

§ 8.

When we contemplate the blessedness of those who are saved, we are forced to turn to the terrible contrast of the misery of the lost. Naturally difficult in itself, the subject has been made none the less so by the controversies of recent years. A matter requiring the most grave and patient treatment has been made the topic of unguarded rhetoric on the one side and on the other; and it has almost come to pass that men who are willing to be disciples of Christ in other things, rebel against His teaching about Hell.

For, as a matter of fact, the clearest and the most awe-inspiring words which form the Church's doctrine on this point, are words of our Lord Himself, recorded in the Gospels.

To conceive what the state of the lost will be, it will suffice to mention the opposite of those things which form the bliss of heaven. Instead of complete soundness and inward unity, our Lord speaks of "destroying both soul and body in hell" (S. Matt. x. 28), and quotes the language of Isaiah about the "worm" which preys unceasingly upon their corruption (S. Mark ix. 48; Isa. lxvi. 24). While the righteous enjoy eternal life by the direct sight and knowledge of Christ, the lost undergo a "second death" (Rev. xxi. 8), which S. Paul describes as an "eternal perishing from the face of the Lord and from the glory of His might" (2 Thess. i. 9). It is what our Lord taught, when He said, "Then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from Me" (S. Matt. vii. 23). In contrast with the perfect new world in which the saints move and reign, the only surroundings of the lost which our Lord mentions, are those of "the hell of fire" (S. Matt. v. 22), and "the furnace of fire" (S. Matt. xiii. 42), and "the outer darkness" (S. Matt. xxv. 30). And while the saints are united with each other in the fellowship of unhindered love, the companionship of the lost is of a sadder kind; "Begone from Me, accursed, into the fire, the eternal fire, which hath been prepared for the devil and for his angels" (S. Matt. xxv. 41). "In the time of harvest, I will say to the reapers,

Gather together first the tares, and bind them into bundles to burn them" (S. Matt. xiii. 30).

The objections which have been raised against the Gospel teaching on this matter are for the most part generous protests against doctrines which appeared to obscure either the love or the justice of God. They have, however, been mostly directed against language and thoughts to which the Catholic Church was never committed, though some of her ministers may have supposed that she was so. Before Christ's teaching about the eternity of chastisement (S. Matt. xxv. 46) can be cordially accepted, it is necessary to have a clear notion about the personages to whom it is to be applied. We may be absolutely certain, to begin with, that none will suffer it who do not fully deserve it. To decide whether any particular person deserves it or not, does not fall within our province, because we are unable to tell what measure of grace has been given, and how far it has been resisted, and the like. But we may certainly trust Him who died for all men, not to pass condemnation upon any who might have received a different sentence, and when the time comes, every one will understand and concur in the judgment which He gives. The lost may be regarded as "many," or as "few;" for those are relative terms (S. Luke xiii. 23, 24); but, whether many or few, they will be lost, not because they were predestined to be lost, nor because God would not elect them to partake of grace, nor because His Spirit was weary of striving with them and gave them up before they were fully tested, nor because they failed

to comply with a standard which was beyond their reach, nor because they mistook the meaning of the Gospel and under a mistake held back from it. All who are lost will be lost by their own fault, in spite of warnings and assistances. They will be lost, not because they were weak, or unimaginative, or stupid; but because they were wicked,—because, when conscience appealed to them, they silenced it,—because they wilfully quenched what light they had,—because they chose what was wrong, knowing that it was wrong, and preferring it to the right—and that not once or twice, but persistently, and with increasing persistence, and to the end, until they had destroyed in themselves the faculties which might have expanded into faith, hope, and charity, which are the life of the soul. They will be lost because they have fixed and determined their characters for evil; so that all good that could be offered them further would only be made food for fresh evil. They have become like devils and not like men.

Here lies the answer to that plea so often urged by tender hearts that a just and merciful God cannot go on for ever and ever punishing men for what they did on earth. Life on earth was short; and it is an exaggeration to say that the sin of a finite being is itself infinite. How then can it be right to prolong punishment out of all proportion to the deeds of sin? But that is not really what God does. He is dealing not merely with the past actions of these unhappy beings, but with their present character. The earthly life both shewed what they were, and made them

what they became; and God treats them accordingly. God must deal with facts as facts. He cannot pretend that things are different from what they are. It is true that, while we are still under probation, He holds His hand, and does not deal with us after our sin nor reward us after our iniquities; because, if He did, we should have no opportunity of amendment. But, when probation has had its work, there is nothing to be gained by continuing an attitude of reserve. Mercy persistently spurned on earth would be equally spurned somewhere else. It would be of no use to give the lost a fresh beginning in a new life of probation; for before they could really start fair, the whole memory of the earthly life, and all its inwrought effects upon the soul, must be obliterated, in which case the men would not really be the same men, but only nominally the same; neither can God do anything so capricious as to annihilate the past. Or if, on the other hand, the men were put to begin life again, on earth, or in paradise, or in heaven with the character which they had formed before death, they would only repeat the same kind of history on the new scene. If, indeed, there were any case, in which character had not had sufficient opportunity of declaring itself in this life, God would undoubtedly give it some other opportunity; but to His eye, with its unerring observation, this life is trial enough, and in rewarding and punishing alike, God is not rewarding or punishing what has once for all been done, but the being who still is what his acts prove and make him.

It will now be evident that the punishment of the lost is not of an arbitrary kind, like the penalties of human law. Amongst men, in order to ensure obedience, it is agreed that those who infringe a regulation shall pay a fixed fine, or be imprisoned for a certain length of time, or have so many lashes. The arrangement is simply conventional, and a power is lodged somewhere of remitting the penalty at discretion. But in the moral world it is all different. The penalty of being a drunkard or a hypocrite is not to pass so many days in hell, or to be tortured with so many degrees of heat; the penalty is, to be a drunkard or a hypocrite. It works like a law of physical nature. It adapts itself with the most minute equity to each individual case, making the more hardened offender suffer more, and the less hardened less. These are the things which make the pains of hell. Stripes, and hard labour, and terms of penal servitude may be remitted or relaxed; but what can remit to a man his being what he is, and what he still chooses to be?

Not that the law is so entirely self-acting as to exclude all personal action on the part of God. There is no reason to shrink from the belief, awful though it is, that God Himself applies His own law to every condemned soul, even as He applies His salvation to every one that is saved. His breath it is, in the Prophet's language, which kindles the fire for them (Isa. xxx. 33). For, though the most part of their penalty is that which comes to them by an inevitable sequence,—to be what they are,—yet they might con-

ceivably be what they are without knowing it. But this God does not allow. It is not His will that they should go on for ever deceiving themselves, and thinking that sin brings no evil consequences. He is determined to bring home to them the true character of their deeds. "I will reprove thee," He says, "and set before thee the things which thou hast done" (Ps. l. 21). If they would not learn it in penitence, by seeing what it cost their Saviour, they must be made to learn it in some other way. We could not otherwise understand how God could be a righteous God. If indeed men's sins were only a personal offence to Himself, and a crossing of His private wishes, so to speak, then He might mercifully pass them over in silence for ever, and lavish benefits upon the doers, even though they still continued to grieve Him. But sin is an outrage upon the world, and upon men in general, and upon the sinner's own soul, and upon the eternal and unchangeable principles of justice which God is bound to maintain; and therefore He cannot but constrain every soul which has transgressed to recognise, one way or another, the majesty and sanctity of the law. This is the vengeance which He takes. Our conception of righteousness, and of the righteousness of God, is not that which is set forth in Holy Scripture, if we exclude from it the idea of retribution. Retribution, the rendering to all men exactly what they deserve, is not the whole of justice, but it is an important element in it; and where retribution is lost sight of, government is enfeebled and becomes immoral. Our

Lord, therefore, does not hesitate to say that vengeance will be taken for the wrongs of the elect (S. Luke xviii. 7); and S. Paul says the same (2 Thess. i. 6 foll.); and it is assumed that all healthy souls will be glad that it should be so, and will rejoice to see Babylon treated as she deserves to be treated (Rev. xix. 1–3).

It conducts us to the same result, if we think of God as love; for the ends of love and justice can never be opposed to each other. When God is said to be love, it is not for a moment to be thought that He loves everything and every one alike. He can only love what is truly loveable. There is nothing loveable in sin, but the very contrary; and even because He is love God cannot help hating it. And in so far as any being, angelic or human, voluntarily identifies itself with sin, God cannot help hating that being. Satan, and those who take part with him, put themselves outside of God's love; or rather, love, in dealing with them, can only shew itself in the form of hatred. Love does not make an exception in disfavour of the lost; on the contrary, it acts towards them in its normal way, manifesting its detestation and abhorrence and fury with them as much for their own sakes as for the sake of others. Hell and its torments are the last resource of love, which it employs with the deepest grief to itself, yet with unhesitating firmness and satisfaction, because it knows that, when souls have reached such a point of wickedness, it is the kindest, as well as the most righteous thing to do. Anything else would do them harm; and God does

not wish them harm, though they may have made it impossible for Him to do them good. Difficult as it seems to imagine it now, the tenderest mother of a lost son will in heaven not only acquiesce in the doom which Christ pronounces upon Him, but will be thankful for it, and say, "Thou, Lord, art merciful; for Thou rewardest every man according to his work" (Ps. lxii. 12).

If this be true, and hell is the best place (so to speak) for the lost to be in, they are not likely to be set at liberty from it, which would mean a transference to a place less advantageous for them. When the Church is asked if their punishment will endure for ever, she can only reply that God has not told her of any end or limit to it, and that where He has not spoken, she cannot speak. Christ's word, "eternal," is not, indeed, the same as "everlasting." It does not express an interminable succession in time, but something which transcends time. It might even be supposed in some circumstances to suggest a fixed period, and might be translated "age-long." But the point to be observed is that our Lord used the same epithet, in the same context, to describe the portions of the saved and of the lost alike. If the life is eternal, so is the punishment; if the word fixes a period to the punishment, it fixes a period to the life (S. Matt. xxv. 46). Perhaps some passages which have been thought to indicate endless time may be otherwise interpreted. For instance, when our Lord says, "Their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched" (S. Mark ix. 48), the thought is rather that of unintermittency than

that of interminableness. And again, there are a few sayings which appear to encourage the thought of a limit that may be reached. Such is the saying, "Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing" (S. Matt. v. 26). But this expression is of the nature of a parable or metaphor, and is used for a very different purpose from that of inspiring hope in the midst of sin. The utmost, then, that can be said is this. We do not know what will answer to temporal succession when we pass out of our present state, and therefore cannot press dogmatically the language which seems to teach an endless duration of punishment. Our knowledge of God's character convinces us that He will punish no one more severely than is necessary, nor for an instant longer than he deserves, and that if at any point some soul in hell could be found to turn and repent and cease to oppose itself to love and holiness, it would cease to be punished as it had been punished. It may be added that God, who has no pleasure in the death of a sinner, would not be likely to spare any pains to bring the lost round, if it were possible for such a thing to happen, and that no imaginable treatment which they could receive would be more likely to conduce to such an end than the treatment which they will receive in hell. But after all is said, the fact remains, that in Holy Scripture this life is constantly regarded as the time for fixing character, that the judgment of the Last Day is spoken of as absolute and conclusive, and that the condition of those who are then condemned is set over against the condition of those who

are justified without a hint that the one is more transient than the other.

§ 9.

Here the doctrine of the Church and of the Bible leaves us. It shews us evil absolutely separated from good, and rendered incapable of doing any further mischief, and made to feel—not by force, but by moral means—its inherent weakness and folly. It shews us evil subjugated to good, and acknowledging its subjugation. If any of those great Principalities in heaven, who watch the drama of human life and learn by it (Eph. iii. 10), were uncertain at the outset whether evil would prove stronger than good, they are now convinced. If some were inclined to waver in their allegiance, and to indulge in some degree of sympathy with the revolt of Satan, the moment is come when they make their confession and are reconciled through Christ (Col. i. 20). The sight of the completed salvation of the saints removes the last vestige of a doubt, and they fall before the throne with a heartfelt and adoring "Amen" (Rev. vii. 12). There is no more room for question. Evil has had every chance, and has utterly failed, and has only recoiled upon the heads of those who, in defiance of love and holiness, sold themselves to it.

This is enough for us to know. If there be anything further to come, we are not told of it. The "times of restitution of all the things which God spake by the mouth of His holy prophets" are the times of the return of Jesus from heaven (Acts iii.

21). There is nothing to indicate an interval between the "coming" of Christ and "the end, when He delivers up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when He shall bring to nought every principality and every authority and power," subjecting even death, the last enemy, to His feet, and then Himself becoming subject to the Father in whose strength He has triumphed, "that God may be all things in all" (1 Cor. xv. 24–28). The Return, the Resurrection, the Judgment, close the Church's vista for the present, with Heaven and Hell dimly seen stretching beyond. It may be that in some unrevealed future, evil will no more be exhibited only as inheriting its own reward, but will be put out of actual existence altogether. If it be so, the method is unknown to us. To annihilate beings still clinging resolutely to evil would seem to be no triumph of goodness, but a confession of failure. To cure Satan and those who are his—for it is hardly logical to dissociate them from him—and so reduce evil once more to the purely notional existence out of which Satan called it,—this would be the only way that would satisfy our conceptions of an abolition of evil. Such a conversion may not be beyond the power of God. It need not necessarily involve the admission of the unhappy beings to a bliss for which they are too late. But to teach for a doctrine of faith such a final purging of evil out of all wills would be rash in the extreme. If not opposed to the spirit of Scripture, it can hardly be reconciled with the letter of it. Nor is it necessary to count upon it. It is sufficient for our present

needs to be assured that justice will be done,—that the event of the long day of time will not be doubtful in the end,—that it will be no indecisive battle between good and evil, or one in which good comes off barely conqueror, and evil with a creditable defeat. The defeat of evil, whatever form it takes, will be a perfect defeat, leaving nothing to be desired, nothing still in the enemy's hands. God will have triumphed in a manner worthy of God, and His redeemed children will see it and be satisfied.

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p. 89 . . . ibid. § 3 F.
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[*The author regrets that he has been unable as yet to verify the saying cited by memory from S. Leo on p.* 203.]

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